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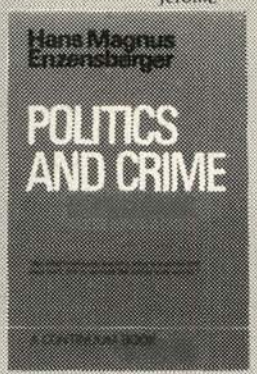

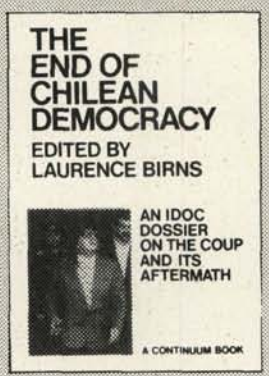

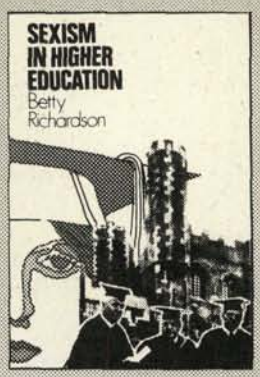

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My name is Tony Jones. I just quit my job as Associate Editor of Harper's Magazine because I had an offer I couldn't refuse.

You see, for some time now I've been hoping to start an entirely new kind of publication. Now the opportunity is here—*if* I can persuade you to help me make the most of it.

No, not by subscribing. I need writers. Researchers. Editors.

Requirements: You are on your own.

And by you, I mean *you*. The new publication I'm asking you to help get started will be produced by its readers. By you, I hope.

As a matter of fact, the whole idea hinges on whether or not you contribute. Let me give you some background:

I was proud to work on Harper's Magazine, and I worked hard on it, but Harper's and other top magazines are committed to publishing the "best" writers in the world. This is understandable. And I agree we need this kind of source.

But this policy locks out communication of another, and in my opinion just as necessary, sort—different, honest, independent messages from the great numbers of intelligent and involved men and women who don't happen to be writers who know editors.

I want to offer a variety of communications from real people about just about anything. Short and pithy. Or longer if it plays that way. I'd have more by-lines than any other publication in the world. *If* my readers really did contribute.

In a real sense, this communication would be a collection of points of view. A swatch of our consciousness. An ongoing biopsy of our civilization.

When I announced my intention to Russell Barnard, the publisher of Harper's, he pledged that if I could actually develop the kind of magazine I wanted, he would publish it.

So I've decided to revive the famous HARPER'S WEEKLY, a national newspaper that flourished concurrently with the monthly Harper's Magazine from 1857 to 1916.

The people who ran that old weekly had the temerity to call it "a journal of civilization." Well, that is exactly what I have in mind for the new Harper's Weekly.

I want *you*, its reader, to write for it. I want you to write about your point of view from where you are. If you are a businessman and you want to talk about business, go ahead. If you are a housewife and you want to write about the effects of permissiveness on children, I think you are highly qualified. If you are a doctor who wants to pick up a pen and write a piece on your secret desire to become a hod carrier, I think it would be interesting.

Do you see it? A magazine containing people's thoughts and shouts. A kind of extended variant of the Op-Ed page of The New York Times, the letters to the editors of all times, hubbubby, and reflective of our civilization.

Frankly, many "experts" say Harper's Weekly doesn't have a chance. Reason? That you won't believe that I really mean what I say about *you* writing for it or researching for it.

Friend, I not only mean it, I mean it so much that *my* main worry about this enterprise is that you *won't* contribute.

I believe we need more exchange. We need more men and women of letters. People who can sit down and think something through and then write about it—not necessarily for posterity but to get the rest of us *thinking*.

Look, I'm also going to go out and buttonhole a person I think we should hear from who may not be a subscriber. And ask him to write. And I'm thinking of challenging some young artists to see if they can do as well with cartoons as old Thomas Nast did. I reserve rights like that. But once again, reader friend, the nub of the magazine will be your contributions, clips, original writing, or responses to other writing.

I've always felt it was a distinctly American trait that we *had* something to say. All of us. And that we couldn't be scared off or even bored off from saying it.

That when it came right down to it, we stood up and spoke our minds and left it at: "That's my opinion, bub."

I believe this is still true. And I love it about us. As for the reading, I believe we have a genuine and unfulfilled hunger to talk to each other.

O.K. If you're interested, you can help us in any of 3 ways.

1. *Do research for us.* As an active reader, you no doubt scan a wide variety of publications such as your local newspaper, specialized newsletters, professional, literary and political journals. Clip and send us items you think deserve attention. For each item we use, you'll receive a credit line and a research fee of $10.

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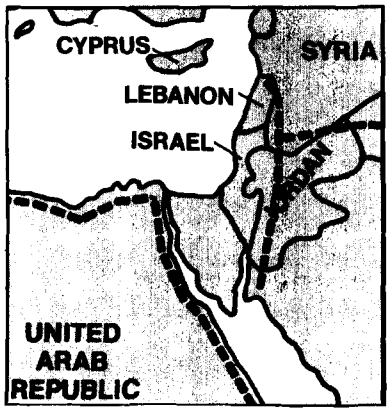

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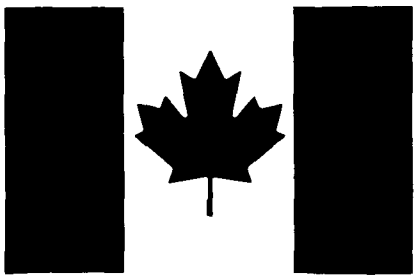

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Volume 13, No. 6 March 1975

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Letters

[DO IT!]

Editors:

The December/January issue is simply superb. Thanks to it, I have my first concrete idea of the present state of the Farm Workers Union, the real alternative to bussing in Boston, the function of the Advertising Council, the statistics behind the end of U.S. imperial advantage, the sadness of Anne Sexton's suicide.

If you can maintain this standard, you'll become the most needed magazine in America. Whatever it takes to obtain and to maintain this standard--you must do it!

Lee Baxandall
Oshkosh, Wisc.

[VIVA LA HUELGA!]

Editors:

George Baker's discussion of the Teamster/Farmworker dispute [December 1974/January 1975] was the most thorough and perceptive article on the subject I've seen in a while. It's a complex situation, and if consumers in the cities are to support the UFWA boycott of table grapes, head lettuce, and Gallo wines, they need reporters of Baker's caliber to help them sort out the various information and propaganda coming at them from all sides.

Lynn Campbell
San Jose, Calif.

[BUSING SYMPOSIUM]

Editors:

I read your special supplement on busing in the December/January issue with great interest. I found some aspects of the symposium interesting, especially Noel Day's informed analysis of the Boston scene, but, on the whole, I found the Symposium disappointing and, in many ways, quite disturbing.

From a national perspective, it is easy to understand why many leftists oppose busing as either (a) a corporate liberal plot to increase racism and divide the working class, (b) an attempt by liberal bureaucrats to coopt the movement for community control of schools and to foist integration on Third World people who don't want it, or (c) a bogus alternative to real improvements in inner-city education for blacks and whites. These arguments are compelling ones. But a closer look at the busing crisis in Boston calls them into question. Boston's blacks have waged a long struggle to break down segregation, and have forced the courts to respond. The fact that the current busing plan is a bad one, deliberately sabotaged by the School Committee, should not disguise the fact that the initiative for busing has come from the black community as part of a long attack on segregation. The recent Mass Mobilization Against Racism held in Boston on Dec. 14 drew significant support from the progressive leadership in the black community and brought together most left groups in the city. Although there is still an ongoing debate about busing within the left, there was a unified feeling at the demonstration that there must be an organized response to racism and that limited, but nonetheless tangible, gains achieved by busing must be defended.

Jim Green
Radical America
Cambridge, Mass.

Editors note:

Make no mistake, we believe that the U.S. is at the crossroads in race relations. For the past 20 years, school desegregation has been the minimum, consensus approach to closing the gap between the races in this country. To abandon it now would be a clear choice for *segregation--and ultimately, for an apartheid society.*

The issue is so important, and has such broad implications for the future, that we must free it from the narrow terms imposed by the current controversy over busing. The real questions are not busing, yes or no, but segregation, economic, political and social discrimination, equal, quality education--yes or no and what now must be done. The purpose of our symposium was to break the boycott against a thorough, intelligent discussion of these many issues; we intend to pursue those issues in greater depth in the near future.

[PASSION OF THE JEWS]

Editors:

I just read my copy of *Ramparts* for October 1974, and discovered, not only two excellent articles on Watergate and President Ford and the decline of the capitalist banking system, but also "The Passion of the Jews," the best article *Ramparts* has ever published. It answers, better than anything I have yet to read, a number of troubling questions, such as, why Jews (after experiencing oppression themselves) would turn around and oppress Palestinians, blacks, and women. It puts together excellently the connections between Zionism, Israel, Russia, the U.S., blacks, and the left. Thank you for writing it.

"... the book is a beacon ... it tells us exactly what does happen ... we have at present a kind of Watergate forensic psychiatry ..."
—Frederick Wertham, M.D.
New York Law Journal 7/74

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LETTERS
(Continued)

There was a minor error that I would like to bring to your attention. You mention quite correctly that the so-called Western democracies failed to do anything to save the Jews during and after World War II, but you missed two important exceptions to that rule, *i.e.*, the Christian monarchies of Sweden and Denmark, who (both after the war and even today) have accepted many penniless Jewish refugees from Germany and Poland with no strings attached.

Again congratulations on an excellent article and an excellent issue.

Michael A. Brush
Los Angeles, Calif.

Editors:

David Horowitz's article "The Passion of the Jews" in *Ramparts'* October issue makes a number of subtle and perceptive points about the failure of modern Jewish ideology to come to grips with itself. But in saying: "Out of the negative community of those who have been singled out for persecution and extermination, there arises the community of those whose solidarity with the stranger, with the persecuted and exterminated, is unconditional." (p. 60) Horowitz missed the central point of Judaism. Judaism is a positive religion, its greatness comes from working out its ethics on the anvil of history. People who seek for essences and purity in it are seeking for the dead–for pure Judaism exists only in romantic memory.

Real Jews seek the opportunity to live as Jews and this entails imperfection. It is this imperfection that creates the real double standard in Jewish existence. Horowitz incorrectly claims that Jews have eschewed the greatness of universalism for the narrowness of parochialism. It has become popular in recent years to see glory in the death of Jews. Judaism has never glorified death, only life. If life and the search to make it meaningful brings down wrath on the Jews, then we should try to show ourselves equal to the test. But to seek such a fate is in Judaism, no less than other western religions, self-destructive and essentially blasphemous.

Alan Gorr
Rock Island, Ill.

[AMNESTY]

Editors:

Re: "Amnesty, A Question of Justice" (Nov. '74), I would like to underscore a few points and add one more of my own.

First, as did so many others, I made all attempts possible to perform alternative service, and was abruptly refused. Something snapped then, and I have never felt unquestioned affection or loyalty to the United States since. The thousands of draft board members across the country bear responsibility for an exodus of minds and youthful enthusiasms and courage of which the U.S. now has demonstrable need.

I found Gene Marine's comments on rites of passage illuminating. I count my coming to Canada as a great event in my life because here, for the first time, I learned a form of self-reliance that is becoming rarer in the United States. Perhaps it would have occurred there also, but here one is freer of obsessive role-expectations. It's alright for a man to show needs, to cry, to have aspirations, in other words, to be a human being. Personal growth is possible here, and it is not ridiculed when it appears.

Yet I will remain here. Gene's article makes a clear statement why. I would not give up my life here for two years service to "purchase" my "right" to visit my family and native land. If any quality of genuine compassion and understanding still exists in an embittered and embattled United States, may it return to *all* the expatriates their God-given right to emotional freedom from haunting past memories. Perhaps some, in that circumstance, may even choose to return and lend their lives' services to a country in need. If they do so choose, it will be their gift to the United States, more than the country has the right to have expected.

Paul B. Ohannesian
Vancouver, B.C.

Editors:

An important omission from your article on amnesty was any reporting on the amnesty movement in this country, for those who want to help out or for those who are eligible for the plan. There is a large-scale effort nationwide, given added steam by Ford's plan, that is continuing to work for universal and unconditional amnesty for *all* those in need of such a plan. Public education with an emphasis on trying to get Congress to override Ford's plan with a no-strings amnesty is the basic strategy right now. Keeping up the very effective boycott of Ford's plan is also very important, and to that it is important for those subject to the plan to know where they can get some good, straight information before they turn themselves in. So, it would be good if you'd publish the addresses of the following two groups:

National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty, 339 Lafayette St., NYC, NY 10012 (an umbrella coalition of many groups who are working for or sympathetic to amnesty), *and*

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, 2016 Walnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103 *or* CCCO/Western Region, 1251 2nd Ave., S.F., Ca. (a group doing much of the counseling of those eligible for the plan –they've done a good study of the plan and have good legal contacts).

It goes without saying, that these groups are desperately in need of money to carry on.

Steve Ladd
War Resisters League/West
San Francisco, Calif.

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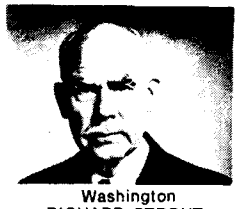

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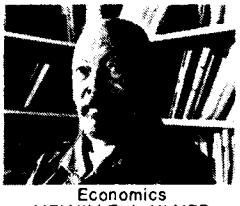

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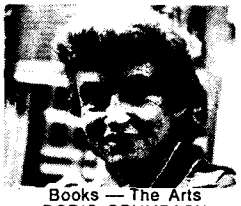

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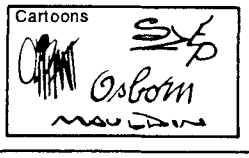

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LETTERS
(Continued)

[BLACKS FOR WALLACE]

Editors:

This is in response to the article "Blacks for Wallace" in your November 1974 issue. What never ceases to amaze me is how people who do not live within the State of Alabama are able to develop such a broad knowledge about the motivation which causes Alabamians to take action that is necessary and in the best interest of their people and state.

The kind gentleman who wrote the article must realize that he does not live in the State of Alabama. Again, I want to make the record clear that I supported and chose to vote for Governor George Wallace for re-election as Governor of the State of Alabama. I have not made any decision as to my choice for President. I would like to further indicate that my reasons for voting for the Governor are as follows:

1. He was the best qualified candidate.
2. My working experience with the Governor and his staff has been a fair one.
3. It is absolutely necessary for some blacks to be able to have a line of communication with the Governor of the state regardless of who he is.
4. It did not take a genius to predict that Governor Wallace would be the Democratic Nominee for Governor. I happen to be a Democrat and this time I chose to support the Democratic Nominee.

When the author speaks of the strife of the 60's during the heat of the racial turmoil, I would like to ask where was he? I was there, whether it was Selma, Tuskegee or Montgomery, Alabama. As a young man I was there marching, picketing, and demonstrating while the Governor was standing in the door. I say to you that I don't know whether or not the Governor has changed, that is his business. I do say to you that I cannot speak for everybody and I don't try to convince other people to do what I do, but the Governor has convinced me that he is trying to be fair and work for all the people of the State of Alabama, and that is all I can ask of any Governor.

In the final analysis, it shall be the people of Alabama, both black and white, who are willing to put aside their differences of the past, come together and work in the best interest for the future of our state. It is these people who will be able to solve the problems facing the people of Alabama.

Johnny Ford
Mayor, Tuskegee, Ala.

[SMOKEY LIES]

Editors:

As Bruce Howard suggests in his excellent "Selling Lies" [December 1974/January 1975] Smokey is the Dancing Bear of Timber Imperialism, his (sic) function to keep us suitably reverent and ignorant when we set foot in our local forest. He's also right that the campaign itself rests on a lie: from 1960-66, when my husband and I were lookouts in the Willamette National Forest, the world's largest Douglas Fir timber stand, at no time did "man-caused" fires go above 15 percent of the total acreage burned. On top of that, lest the image of a careless family picnic rise too swiftly in mind, I should point out that nearly all the men causing the fires were involved in work in the woods: loggers careless with gasoline cans, machinery sparks, electrical shorts and train hotboxes. The vast majority of acreage burned was lightning-caused.

In fact, Smokey doesn't want you in the woods at all, and wants you to feel guilty as hell while you're there, so you won't notice that the Timber Imperialists are cutting the piss out of public lands while holding their own vast acreages behind "Private—No Trespassing" and "Tree Farm—No Trespassing" signs. The Department of Agriculture (motto: "The greatest good for the greatest number") polices and protects our forests from us, builds roads for the Timber Imperialists and develops new kinds of trees—all so private industry can pull in mammoth profits selling the rest of us what Dickens referred to as "cheap deal" and "shoddy."

If everybody who read this letter went out to their nearest forest and set a fire it still wouldn't equal mother nature's lightshows. In fact some Indian tribes set fires when they need cash money, being then hired on as fire-fighting crews, which is anybody's idea of a hard way to make a buck. Too bad their name isn't Weyerhauser; he bought Cal., Ore. and Wash. land with the Kaiser's money at twenty-five cents an acre just before the First World War from the guy who may have served as the prototype for Smokey: "Teddy" Roosevelt, who had his own Lie, that he was a conservationist, while he killed wild animals and gave away with both hands the lands of all the people.

M. F. Beal
Seal Rock, Ore.

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IT WASN'T THE CIA, and it wasn't the phone company, and it wasn't even the U. S. Postal Service. Frankly, it was us. We didn't publish a February 1975 Ramparts because we couldn't afford it.

At Ramparts, of course, economic crisis isn't news. But we're glad to say that, without a tax rebate or a public works grant, for our own finances at least, the worst seems to be over. To us that means survival is no longer a question, though as usual it will be a struggle. Or, in other words, if you can keep it up, so can we.

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(In any case, everyone can help by filling in our readership survey which appears on page 13 of this issue. It will boost our chances in the magazine advertising game.) Naturally we will extend all subscriptions by one month.

The Editors

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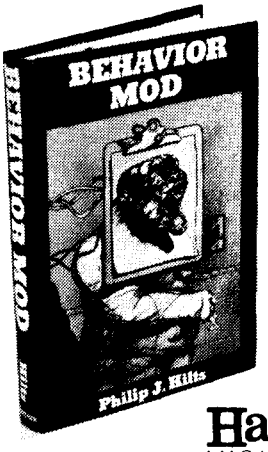

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   ☐ first time ☐ rarely ☐ occasionally ☐ often ☐ regularly
4. How many others read your copy? ☐ one ☐ two ☐ three ☐ four or more
5. Are you a ☐ man ☐ woman?
6. How old are you? ☐ under 16 ☐ 16–21 ☐ 22–25 ☐ 26–30
   ☐ 31–35 ☐ 36–40 ☐ 41–50 ☐ 51–60 ☐ over 60
7. Currently, are you
   ☐ in school ☐ working ☐ unemployed by choice ☐ unemployed by necessity ☐ retired
8. If you are a student, what is your level?
   ☐ high school ☐ college undergrad ☐ graduate school ☐ other_____
9. If you're not in school, how far did you go?
   ☐ high school ☐ undergraduate ☐ B.A. ☐ M.A. ☐ Ph.D. ☐ other_____
10. If employed, what kind of work do you do? ☐ administrative ☐ the arts ☐ writing ☐ teaching
    ☐ other professional ☐ technical ☐ clerical ☐ crafts ☐ corporate ☐ commercial
    ☐ other_____
11. Are you ☐ single ☐ living together ☐ married, no children ☐ married, children under 18
    ☐ married, all children over 18 ☐ separated ☐ divorced ☐ widowed
12. Do you ☐ own or ☐ rent your home?
13. Describe your community. ☐ urban ☐ suburban ☐ rural
    ☐ under 25,000 people ☐ under 50,000 ☐ under 100,000 ☐ over 100,000 ☐ over 500,000
14. In the past year, have you traveled? ☐ inside the U.S. ☐ in Canada ☐ Latin America
    ☐ Caribbean ☐ Europe ☐ Africa ☐ Asia ☐ the Pacific
15. Which credit cards do you use? ☐ none ☐ BankAmericard ☐ Master Charge ☐ other bank card
    ☐ Carte Blanche ☐ Diners Club ☐ American Express ☐ oil company ☐ other_____
16. About how many books do you read a month?
    ☐ less than one ☐ 1–2 ☐ 3–4 ☐ 5–6 ☐ 7–8 ☐ more
17. What magazines do you buy regularly?_____ _____
    _____ _____ _____
18. How many books a year does your household purchase?
    ☐ less than 10 ☐ 10–19 ☐ 20–29 ☐ 30 or more
19. How many records? ☐ less than 10 ☐ 10–19 ☐ 20–29 ☐ 30 or more
20. What kind of music do you like?
    ☐ rock ☐ classical ☐ popular ☐ country and western ☐ jazz ☐ other_____
21. How many films do you see a month?
    ☐ none ☐ one ☐ two ☐ three ☐ four or more
22. How often do you drink

beer	☐ rarely	☐ occasionally	☐ often	☐ daily	☐ never
table wine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vintage wine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
liqueurs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
scotch or whiskey	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
gin, rum or vodka	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
soft drinks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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23. Do you smoke?

☐ cigarettes ☐ cigars ☐ a pipe ☐ never touch tobacco

24. Do you own or plan to buy?

	own	plan to buy
still camera ($50–$150)	☐	☐
still camera (over $150)	☐	☐
movie camera	☐	☐
stereo ($50–$200)	☐	☐
stereo (over $200)	☐	☐
tape recorder	☐	☐
camping equipment	☐	☐
sporting goods	☐	☐
motorcycle	☐	☐
bicycle (over $50)	☐	☐

25. What about automobiles?

	own	plan to buy
domestic economy car	☐	☐
foreign economy car	☐	☐
full-sized car	☐	☐
sports car	☐	☐
second car	☐	☐

☐ I don't have one and don't want one

Thank you for your time

Elliot Kanter

ELLIOT KANTER
For the Ramparts Staff

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In Defense of Paranoia

An Exchange between Carl Oglesby and David Horowitz

"The Nixon crisis had a class structure, not merely a cast of characters—a structure left standing after Nixon's fall. And the forces of resentment and bitterness that molded and powered his political imagination, and put his nihilism to work, are most certainly still out there."

In his article "Fascism and Other Nightmares," (RAMPARTS Sept. '74) David Horowitz sets out to show that fears of fascism in Euro-American politics I expressed three years ago "have been proved groundless by subsequent events," that I am still "operating on the assumptions that buried the New Left under a wave of sectarian paranoia . . . during the disintegration of SDS and the heyday of the Weatherman war machine." He bases his claim that my fears are groundless, incredibly enough, on Watergate, as though three years ago anybody could guess that the end of the White House secret political police would be their arrest at the Watergate.

On the contrary, what we learned as a result of Watergate—what we happened to learn by virtue of an accidental bust that happened late one night and was hardly even recognized as a watershed until eight months had gone by and McCord's letter to Sirica finally unzipped it—everything that Watergate has let out shows that the "paranoias" of the Sixties fascist-criers like myself were based on rather clear-eyed judgments of Nixon, of his group, of their intentions, and of the methods they would introduce to national politics. It would be naive but plausible for Horowitz to say, now that Watergate (as he thinks) has informed and saved us all, that fears once soundly based now stand relieved by the providence of Watergate. But to say that Watergate revelations show the error of that fear, and to boast with Horowitz that "even three or four years ago, the fear of fascism didn't make much sense to some of us," in my mind flies totally in the face of reason, recent experience, common sense, and that tradition in radical thought that recognizes a difference between a few blossoms being cut and roots being unearthed. Sure, a few comrades have gotten out of their trials because of Watergate side-effects in the legal system, and there is at the moment a great flood of happy talk on the point of our system's newly demonstrated workability. But does Horowitz really mean to join that chorus?

It seems to me, indeed, that Horowitz is guilty of the fault that Steve Weissman found with me—namely, of actually trusting that the system does work, that "corporate liberalism," the essentially benevolent despotism of an essentially civilized ruling elite, will cut in at the last minute to reassert itself against chauvinism.

I totally disagree. I think the Yankees certainly have recaptured the throne in the Watergate confrontation, and that they are in a solid political position between David Rockefeller's Ford and Ford's Nelson Rockefeller. But then the Yankee banks and Detroit iron have generally gotten along pretty well anyway, and the ascendancy of the two is not the making of a new national coalition, it is merely the spectacular return of an old one. In other words, it is the return of *an old program,* of soggy bits and pieces of programs long discarded, approaches long abandoned, a little conservative here, a little liberal there. Watch the economy. That is where we will see if the Yankee mutineers know how to run their old ship.

Put it this way: If radicals think—as I think everyone ought to—that the kind of political threat posed by pre-Watergate Nixon is rooted in social conditions as well as in the personality problems of a small group of palace officials, then they cannot logically also think that the purge of Nixon has removed the sources of that threat.

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The Nixon crisis has a class structure, not merely a cast of characters, just as CREEP's dirty tricks have an origin in America's current sense of strain—over economic issues, foreign policy issues, race issues, issues of governance—strains which persist in the Ford administration.

This class structure is left standing after the fall of Nixon. What brought Nixonism about, the ambience that encouraged him to choose as he did, the forces of resentment and bitterness that molded and powered his political imagination and put his nihilism to work through the U.S. presidency—these forces and conditions must still be out there. And it is a task of radical interpretation to illuminate them, these human forces that work beyond the human individual.

Horowitz opens his attack on my sympathy for the Weatherpeople by quoting the following from my review of Kirkpatrick Sale's book, *SDS*.

"Open organizations like SDS can no longer function, are no longer necessary, and will be increasingly subject to state-police repression. If activists mean to secure the integrity of their apparatus under these conditions, they will have to lay its foundations below the surface.... The Weather analysis has hardly been overturned by events. Liberalism was pulling back before Nixon and not even Watergate has put it back on the offensive."

In the first place, I stand by the last part of that, though not Horowitz's misreading of it, and point out again that it is not *liberalism* that is winning anything in the power struggle of Watergate; the only winners are the powers of the pro-detente Northeast: a distinction precisely which the Yankee-Cowboy "metaphor" facilitates. (And if that is not clear after Ford-Rockefeller, it never will be.)

In the second place, the words Horowitz quotes are preceded in my text by a paragraph reading as follows:

"To those who think the Weatherpeople were blinded by their desperation, I want to stress the coherence and intelligibility of the analysis that underlay their acts. In so many words, the Weather position had come to be that American democracy was financed off the backs of the peoples of the Third World by imperialism; that when imperialism suffered an external setback as in Vietnam [I might have added: and the Middle East], that would be reflected in terms of heightened domestic tension between democracy and capitalism, [e.g., the energy crisis, inflation]; that as of the turn of the decade it was clear that the U.S. military could not prevail against the Vietnamese revolution without escalating the war still again; and that the new escalations were certain to be coordinated with means for suppressing the dissent that would also predictably escalate.

"So in 1969 the feeling was universal on the Left that what had been bad before with Johnson was about to get worse with Nixon. The threat of fascism seemed to be building up exactly as theory predicted it would, confronted with the resistance of the Vietnamese. The leading question was what to do, and the leading answer was the Weatherman's: open organizations like SDS can no longer function," etc., etc., into the passage Horowitz quotes.

I say this context makes it clear the passage Horowitz quotes in order to destroy is a paraphrase of Weatherman reasoning as of 1969, not a passage of free-standing current argument. The point of the paraphrase, of course, is to show that in essential respects the RYM-Weatherman analysis of 1969-70 has been roughly borne out by events. That analysis is in no way refuted by the Watergate *arrests*, and it is in fact confirmed by the Watergate and other *break-ins*. Yes, the state *does* use unlawful force and subversion against legitimate citizen assemblies. Yes, it will do anything to protect itself. It will keep political prisoners and make secret war.

Why is Horowitz not asking: How much of this police subversion has there been? How much of an impact on the precipitous decline of the student Left in 1969-70 might it have had? Why is RAMPARTS leaving to NBC's Carl Stern the struggle to declassify and publish the still incompletely disclosed memos of May 1968 in which Hoover launched an evidently concerted, no-limits FBI program to destroy the New Left? Or put it this way: How much of a threat of fascism must there be, or how actual must that threat become, before RAMPARTS or

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Horowitz will treat it as a serious factor in Left politics and possibly in the late decline of the Left, and stop insisting hysterically that it was our internal and intrinsic problems, our "psychological" problems, that undid us?

My argument with the Weatherpeople was about their belief that the right way to answer "fascism," i.e., the program of the 1968 Hoover memos, of the LEAA and JD internal security squads, of Operations Sandwedge and Gemstone and the Huston plan, was to make the core movement organizations so secret and tight that no police penetration could happen. Thus, the political emphasis the Weatherpeople gave the Venceremos Brigade was to (try to) use it for developing full-time ("underground") cadre rather than expanding the base of the movement. At the Austin SDS meeting in March, 1969, in which I found myself star-chambered out of SDS, Bernardine Dohrn actually picked up Lenin's slogan, "Better fewer but better," to defend this stance.

I defended against this a position quite like what Horowitz now proposes: "The safest and most effective politics in times of repression are open, democratic, and publicly defended," he writes. That's what I was saying to the Weatherpeople in 1969 about the politics of Venceremos. I failed in that argument, lost faith, and retired to a commune in the country, but never did I defend a politics of clandestinity or incendiarism or terror. I have only been trying to make clearer the line of reasoning that led the Weatherpeople to their disastrous decisions and to warn against the current tendency to psychoanalyze their heads instead of analyzing their context and situation and arguments.

[PURE POISON]

Horowitz calls me irresponsible for suggesting that by 1969 Progressive Labor might have been a police-penetrated organization made use of by the government in its secret campaign to break up the New Left. I understand the sensitivity of this point and am inclined to agree with Horowitz – that I should not have named a particular organization without more positive evidence.

But on the other hand, the point is sensitive two ways. We know for a fact that ever since the ascent of Johnson there has been a growing national security establishment feeding off the "black threat" and the "radical threat," threats chronically exaggerated by national security forces for purposes of routine empire-building. We do not know how much money a year has been pouring into police counter-insurgency, political intelligence, and related activities, but we do know that there has been a lot and that the security business has been a growth industry since Watts and Columbia.

What effect has this activity had on the Left? We know that SDS was penetrated, we know for a fact that there were informers and provocateurs close into the Weather Bureau. Why is Horowitz so worried about wondering if there was a penetration or manipulation of PL, say, by the New York Red Squad's Flanigan in some LEAA security hookup? For openers.

Let me make it clear that I do not imagine that all PLers were cops. I accept the more general opinion that most of them were, by their own lights, honest radicals in whom an authoritarian character disorder produced the belief that PL's crapulous Marxism was authentic liberation philosophy. But suppose that in the apparent general infiltration of the New Left in the late Sixties, PL was penetrated along with all the others. Indeed, if it is a genuine left-wing organization, why would it not have been penetrated and manipulated with the rest? Then in what way could it have been manipulated? What could have been the mission and operating mode of those (hypothetical) agents who worked through PL?

A few old PLers have responded in character that I am "red-baiting" them, the same upside-down idea they screamed up at Tom Bell and Bernardine Dohrn at the stormy 1968 convention in East Lansing. No, I am actually *white*-baiting them, to use the political color code precisely: I am raising a question about the uses to which *national reaction*—the white flag—may have put PL's independent and autonomous madness. I am saying that very possibly like NCLC or the SLA, PL's consistent and unvarying

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disruption of the politics of native movement may have gone far beyond the mere fractious advocacy of dogma. It was too intense, too complete, too unrelieved for me ever to think it was all motivated only by a yearning for revolution. The only thing PL and its blood relative, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (of Lee Harvey Oswald fame), ever did right was the early Cuba trips and the early May Second Movement–both of which were immediately penetrated by New York's notorious Red Squad.

Horowitz knows that I am not the first or only person to wonder about this, indeed to be morally convinced that PL was total and pure poison to SDS, so much so that whether there was a police hand or no police hand in what PL did, *there would still be no reason in the world for SDS to consider PL in the remotest sense an organization with which it could share "fraternal and comradely" relations.* PL might as well have been Young Americans for Freedom, its difference with SDS was that great; and the similarity between us–there was nothing to it, it was just that PL showed up at SDS meetings, said they were other kinds of radicals sort of like us, and proceeded to make SDS's attempt at an internal democratic life impossible. That was, at a certain long moment, PL's total mission in life. Ask anybody who was there.

[THE OCTOPUS]

About the "alarmist" and "paranoid" warnings of government repression Horowitz accuses me of flinging around, all I can do is try to clarify my original argument. All through the Sixties, several forces have apparently been converging in the direction of major structural disruption in the United States. I think one of them arises in the difficulties of the Yankee-Cowboy governing coalition, but others are more familiar and more widely noted. There is the increasing apparent imprecision of the control mechanisms of the Atlantic-system economy. Yo-yo market effects begin to reinforce and extend each other on a world-wide scale. Inflation, joblessness, and shortages of everything combine everywhere at once.

Everyone, certainly the Right, certainly the Left, expects political activity to grow heated under conditions likely to obtain. That expectation can lead serious people to arguments for preparation. (Attorney General Saxbe himself has warned against the threat of a "national police state.")

The Left, Right and Center alike have been buzzing for years with stories of a powerful espionage apparatus manifest in a cluster of think-tanks and arms-bearing federal, state, and municipal institutions. Ross and Wise called it "The Invisible Government"; Fletcher Prouty more recently "The Secret Team." Recently we discovered the CIA has been running a project in the domestic security sphere (which it is supposed religiously not to enter) called "The Octopus." We would call the whole larger scene The Octopus. A little of the CIA, the DIA, the Navy types (especially at CINCPAC headquarters in Honolulu), the narcs (especially DALE), the local Red Squad thugoons, maybe a littler Permindex: The Octopus.

Actually, I do not think Horowitz would deny the existence of The Octopus. He would not deny the growing intensity of the state's concern with the growth of the New Left and (this was key) the union of the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement after 1968. He would probably not deny that The Octopus consumed a vast, still unreckoned budget in its as yet barely disclosed efforts during the 1968-72 period to destroy the New Left. He would not deny that that was Johnson's final strategy or that it was Nixon's strategy in no-trump.

All he would deny, as I make it out, is that the large amounts of anti-red activity that we know and infer took place produced any real effect at the target, though he sees the target shattered today.

This shattering, he believes, comes from internal causes. I believe it must have come from external causes as well and that the priority question, certainly for the Left, the victim, should be: What were the political police up

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to, what was all this security money actually buying and what new crap are they pulling down now?

Particularly in the wake of Watergate, I should have thought the New Left would be eager to take up this question. Watergate has opened mass consciousness to realities of conflict in Euro-American politics and made it possible for western media collectivities to see truths formerly seen only by their victims.

But now I see Horowitz promising with a straight face that the letting of Nixon and Agnew has solved the problem and stopped the slide toward repression and police power. Will his next "Perspectives" tell us that Watergate shows how well the system works? Here is Horowitz post-Watergate, after all these disclosures (and lately the disclosure of *"Pentagon measures against a Nixon coup"* during his last days in the White House!), and still Horowitz is looking for a Nixon who might have "suspended the electoral process and established his permanent reign," the which not finding, he sighs his relief and tells us he and his were never really worried; though now we actually know what then Horowitz could only guess—that Nixon would not attack the electoral system with his Colsons and Segrettis and Hunts, would not have a Huston Plan and an Operation Gemstone and a cancer growing, would not install a Gestapo activity in the White House, and would not destroy Muskie to promote McGovern to promote a "mandate" to destroy much of what remained of North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

I have never been saying that the fang has hit the mainstream or that there is no possibility of avoiding worse damage and recovering. But I stick to the view that this country has taken a wide variety of sometimes longish steps in the direction of adopting and accepting police-state methods, and that but for the apparent accident of the Watergate bust, the Hunts, Colsons, Mitchells, Haldemans, and Nixons would be slouching toward Bethlehem to be born.

A Reply

"Democratic systems are not made in heaven. In a class society, abuses will not only take place, but for certain groups will be systematic. But there is a difference between repression within a democratic framework and a fascist system, which denies the basic framework of democratic rights."

Two observations will help to clarify the differences between Carl Oglesby's perspective on recent political developments and mine. The first is to note the difference between a repression which takes place within an overall framework that is democratic, and a fascist *system,* which excludes democratic forms of expression and denies the basic framework of democratic rights. The term *fascism,* if it is to have any specific analytic meaning, must signify more than an abusive distortion of politics within the normal order of electoral democracy as we have known it. It must mean the abrogation of that order and its replacement by formal dictatorship, the outlawing of unions, parties and other forms of open and organized political opposition.

Of course, democratic systems are not made in heaven. In a class society, abuses will not only take place, but for certain groups they will be systematic. But the political meaning of this repression, and the political options for resisting it, are fundamentally different than they would be if the very principle of opposition, and the legitimacy of free political expression, were denied. Most of Oglesby's criticism of my article hinges on a confusion or rejection of this point.

The second observation is that even if fascism is seen as a "last resort" of the ruling class in bourgeois societies (and I think the historical experience shows the phenomenon to be somewhat more complex than this), that still does not mean that increased pressures on the system, a catastrophic economic crisis, or even a growing challenge on the left will necessarily produce a fascist solution. Often the system finds its flexibility, even in the chasm of the social crisis, in a leftward rather than a rightward shift. Consider the American Thirties, when the ruling class confronted the greatest economic depression in history, coupled with the specter of a worldwide communist challenge. The response was the liberal reformism of the New Deal. Yet, many on the Left, at the time (including the Communist Party), misread the political meaning of the New Deal, and regarded Roosevelt as a proto-fascist during the early years of his administration. This was a serious political error with serious political consequences that a less schematic approach would have avoided.

In assessing the trend of recent events, the question that has to be asked is whether a significant section of the ruling class has shown itself ready to abandon the democratic political framework which has served

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it so well during the last two hundred years, in order to introduce a fascist dictatorship as a last means of preserving its rule. To ask the question is to answer it. The events of Watergate clearly indicate that no significant section of the ruling class is ready for such a desperate step. Nixon and his entourage, whose offenses never even approached that threshold, were considered expendable by all factions of the power structure for their transgression against the constitutional code. This does not mean that there are no fascists in Washington as a result of Watergate, or that a fascist mentality is not widespread in certain federal bureaucracies. It simply means that the commitment to the two-party system and the Bill of Rights is still a powerful force in the determination of ruling class strategy and is likely to remain so in the immediate future.

It is true, as Oglesby points out, that the discovery of the Watergate burglary was accidental, and that the revelations that attended it might just as easily have been buried. Yet far more impressive is the fact that so trivial an infraction of the laws could have toppled a man of such power as the president (and such malevolent design as Nixon). For the conservative argument—that the infractions for which Nixon was to be tried were not impeachable offenses—was a pretty realistic one. If Nixon was not going to be tried for war crimes, it hardly seemed fair or practical to remove him merely for the dirty tricks that are standard features of American political campaigns, or for the coverups and evasions of the law that have been common devices of the presidency while extending America's imperial frontiers. In the final analysis, Nixon went down because he lost his credibility, and therefore his utility as a chief executive, not because he was planning a *coup d'état.* The difference is more than academic.

The perspective outlined here does not entail the claim that there will cease to be political repression in the wake of Watergate—a benevolent despotism, as Oglesby characterizes corporate liberalism, is still a despotism—but that the terms of the political struggle in America will be set by the democratic framework and its party system; to proceed on the assumption that that framework is fascist, or almost fascist, is a political course that is paranoid and self-isolating.

[POISON IN GOVERNMENT BOTTLES]

So much for the general perspective; now for a specific, but illustrative point: Oglesby wants to know how actual the threat of fascism must become "before Horowitz will treat it as a serious factor in Left politics and possibly in the late decline of the Left, and stop insisting so hysterically that it was our internal and intrinsic problems, our 'psychological' problems that undid us?"

My answer is that it is not the threat of fascism that has to be stronger for me to treat it as a serious factor in Left politics, but the concrete, verifiable and visible evidence that it did play such a role. In my previous article I chided Oglesby (gently I thought) for implying that the Progressive Labor Party was a police operation against SDS without offering a shred of concrete evidence—not a single agent even—to support his claim. On the basis of his reasoning and lack of supporting evidence, I further pointed out that one could argue at least as plausibly that PL's opponents in RYM I and RYM II were police, since their behavior could also be viewed as crazy and/or irresponsibly dogmatic with no apparent interest in the survival of SDS. (It was the Weather faction, and not PL, as Oglesby tells us, whose lack of concern for building the movement helped to demoralize him and push him into premature retirement.) Oglesby's reply to my criticism is disconcerting. In two sentences he apologizes for the slander ("I am inclined to agree with Horowitz . . .") and then in five paragraphs repeats and escalates the charges against PL, again without a shred of evidence.

Perhaps it would be fairer to Oglesby to say that he escalates the *innuendoes* against PL. Charges imply some specifics, and Oglesby is offering none. But even the innuendoes lead us in circles. PL was poison for SDS. Was the poison made in government bottles? Even if it wasn't actually concocted by the government, did the government contrive to administer the doses at crucial junctures in SDS's development? Such are Oglesby's questions, but why raise the speculation at all? What utility can that have? If PL was poison for SDS, why didn't SDS recognize this and take steps to deal with it? Were police agents within SDS responsible for this too? The operative questions are really political. To bring in the police as a *deus ex machina* takes our minds off the questions that matter, and directs us to a line of inquiry that is not only unproductive, but fraught with positive perils as well.

Anybody's politics can be made to fit a pattern in which they can be seen by their opponents as expressions of a diabolical police effort to mislead the masses, divert or destroy organizations, discredit the movement, etc. In fact, there is hardly a leader on the Left whom I have not heard at some time or other described by a member of some opposing faction as an "agent," and always with the same circumstantial speculation in place of evidence. Objectively, they used to say in the old Left, so-and-so is a counter-revolutionary; objectively, Oglesby seems to be saying, PL is a police organization.

Since such charges are highly divisive, politically destructive and generally paranoia inducing, it has always seemed prudent to try to deal with the political positions and arguments of opposing factions rather than indulging in loose speculation about their origins and motives. SDS's failure to deal with PL adequately was a political failure, not a security failure, and nothing that Oglesby has said so far convinces me otherwise.

Finally, I have neither promised nor suggested that Watergate would spell an end to repression (or secret wars). Nor am I inclined to say that Watergate shows how well the system works (except for those in power). The system is democratic *and* racist—as it has been, if not since the pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock (when it was not democratic) then for two hundred years. It is democratic *and* imperialist, as it has been for as long as it has been democratic and racist. What is disturbing now is that while the system's destructive tendencies have shown no tendency to slacken, the Left is so disoriented by paranoia and distrust, and loss of faith, that it will not be able to get on its feet and gather its strength for the important struggles to come.

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The Middle East:

Will We Go To War?

The United States, in spring of 1975, may go to war to seize the oil of Arabia. This idea is now sweeping through what passes for informed circles, and is being accepted by the American public with equanimity—in some cases with glee,

in others almost with relief, and with no discernible sense of horror. Of course I cannot prove that this is the willful intent of the U.S. But consider Kissinger's warning at the start of 1975 that he could not rule out the use of force if the oil producers initiated "some actual strangulation of the industrial world." This was echoed only two weeks later by President Ford, who emphasized that strangulation is the key word. "Strangulation, if you translate it into the terms of a human being, means that you are just about on your back."

Of more than passing interest is that Dr. Kissinger specifically referred to the strangulation of industrial Europe and Japan. This thoroughly confused many who pondered his statement. Did he mean the U.S., in effect, was exempt from possible strangulation if the Arab oil embargo were resumed? Superficially, that would seem to be his meaning. But closer examination casts the gravest of doubts upon this interpretation. It casts doubt, in fact, upon what the word strangulation, uttered by these two men of immense power, was really intended to mean.

For what was overlooked by the public at the time of these utterances was an extraordinary event. Saudi Arabia had announced its refusal, henceforth, to sell petroleum to England in exchange for pounds sterling, which, in the Saudis' opinion, was far too unstable a currency to be depended upon to represent the value implicit in a contract price. A leading nation's currency was being rejected as equivalent in dependable value to other nations' physical product. The reason of course was the 20 percent per annum inflation which England is suffering, and resulting downward pressures on sterling in foreign exchange markets.

by Terence McCarthy

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This is no mere economic abstraction. It is a matter of the utmost immediate gravity, *actually* involving the possible strangulation of at least part of England's economy. Yet, to the confusion of American news analysts, Saudi Arabia simultaneously announced that it had no intention of drawing down its massive sterling balances from London.

Contradictory? In appearance only. The sterling which Saudi Arabia was refusing was a very different sterling from what it had been previously getting for its oil. Earlier, England had guaranteed payment for oil in sterling equivalent to its foreign exchange value measured in a package of other currencies—i.e. a reasonably stable purchasing power. Suddenly, England announced that it would no longer index sterling *vis à vis* other currencies—and it was this unguaranteed sterling, of undependable world value, which Saudi Arabia refused to accept in payment for petroleum. Saudi Arabia's sterling deposits, on the other hand, were already guaranteed in terms of other currencies. There was simply no reason for them to be drawn down.

Clearly, if a refusal by oil producers to accept payment in currencies of shrinking values were to extend to still more currencies than sterling, chaos could result for some countries. Was this likely? Would the yen, or the dollar, receive comparable treatment? If so, could this produce anything approaching the strangulation of industry to which America's president and secretary of state have each referred? The answer is given by developments.

According to Clyde H. Farnsworth of the *New York Times* (1/24/75) the sudden fall in the foreign exchange value of the dollar (2.1 percent in French francs; 2.4 percent in westmarks; 3.4 percent in Swiss francs; 2.0 percent in lire; 1.0 percent in sterling—all in the single week ending 1/24/75; and a 12-month fall of 18.3 percent in French francs; 18.4 percent in westmarks; 28.6 percent in Swiss francs; 5.4 percent in lire; 7.8 percent in sterling) has led some oil-exporting countries to begin contemplating treating the dollar as Saudi Arabia has treated unguaranteed sterling. The dollar may be rejected as an acceptable currency through which to effectuate oil sales and purchases. Unconfirmed reports have it that Algeria has already reached a decision, and Kuwait may follow suit, not to sell petroleum for dollars.

This *is* strangulation in the Kissinger meaning of the term. If the dollar follows sterling in being rejected as acceptable payment for oil, and most surely if this becomes a full OPEC decision, the world will be thrust into immediate turmoil.

For sterling and the dollar are the principal transaction currencies through which oil sales and purchases are effected. And it is difficult to foresee the dollar regaining stability in foreign exchange markets (i.e., acceptability as probably ranging in value within a very narrow trading band) in light of Mr. Ford's call for a $109 billion increase in the national debt ceiling, and a $46-50 billion anticipated federal deficit for this year. In fact, Switzerland has imposed a 40 percent per annum negative interest charge upon all new dollar deposits in Swiss banks, if these deposits translate themselves into Swiss francs.

Moreover, from present best evidence, the OPEC countries are very reluctant, and may refuse, to accept payments

for oil in gold unless the transaction price reflects a minimum drop of 25 percent in the price of gold, and perhaps as much as 30+ percent fall in gold—i.e., the equivalent of the price at which West Germany mortgaged Italy's gold to support the lira when it was in trouble.

[NAKED CONFRONTATION]

Thus what is in the making is the most naked of confrontations. On the one hand, an OPEC refusal to sell oil to England or to the United States in exchange for their national currencies. On the other hand, an obstinate insistence by England and the U.S. that, whatever the price for oil set by OPEC, it must be sold for national currencies at their face value at transaction date.

These national attitudes, if maintained obdurately by

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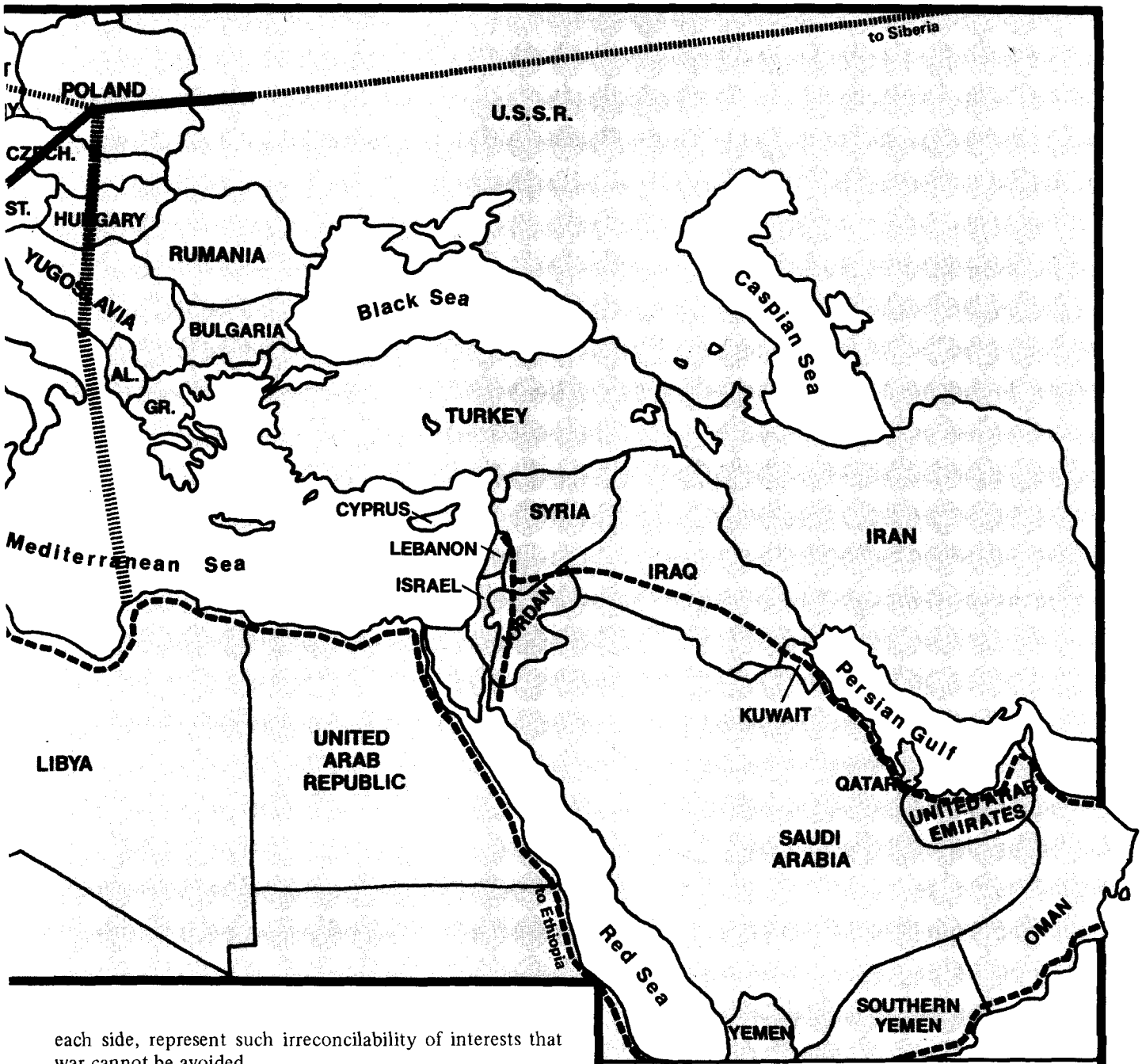

each side, represent such irreconcilability of interests that war cannot be avoided.

This is the crux of the matter. If war comes, it will not only be over the question of oil, but over the question of paper money—the paper money of the outworn imperial power (England) and the paper money of the fumbling, as yet unsuccessful, new imperial power (the U.S.).

The danger of war is therefore real and imminent. What the world now faces is the possibility of a universal breakdown in the customary mechanism of world trade such that, as currency after currency follows sterling and the dollar into unacceptability, international movement of fuels may cease. Whether or not OPEC in 1975 posts the dollar as an unacceptable currency is secondary to the fact that this danger now hangs over the dollar, and will increase, not decrease, as the domestic and foreign ex-

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Current plans for a highway and oil pipeline network that would tie together Europe, North Africa and the Middle East in a new Mediterranean civilization.

- existing pipeline from USSR to Italy
- agreed-upon pipeline from Libya to Poland
- projected pipelines
- planned route of trans-Arabian highway

(all routes are approximate)

Map by Diane Coleman

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"The simplest, straightest path towards assuring that Arab currencies will not grow to dominate the world monetary system is to go to war. What can be seized need not be bought—and nothing seems simpler than that."

change value of the dollar declines. This danger has already been posited for the dollar and effectuated for sterling. The confrontation, in effect, has occurred.

The situation, however, is not quite as simple as this analysis may seem to imply. OPEC has uttered no threat—nor even implied one—that it will cease to ship petroleum in exchange for paper money *per se*. What it has done in the case of sterling, and implied for the dollar, is that it may decide to ship petroleum only in return for a balanced package of foreign exchange more or less guaranteed as to purchasing power. There is talk, in fact, of the creation of a sort of OPEC currency, based on the value of the collective trading surpluses of the OPEC countries, in which OPEC will demand purchasing countries pay for their oil.

In effect, this would put the world monetary systems on a petroleum base of value, the "black gold" system advocated by some theorists in the United States as long ago as 1943.

Politically, this would be intolerable for advanced industrial powers already unable to meet either their internal or external debts. But Occam's Razor applies as much in politics as the laws of the Universe. The simplest adequate hypothesis must take precedence over, and exclude, more complicated formulations. And the simplest, straightest path towards assurance that Arab currencies will not grow to dominate the world monetary system is to go to war. What can be seized need not be bought—and nothing seems simpler than that.

[A DESPERATE SCENARIO]

How will the war start? By an Israeli attack on Syria, perhaps in May of this year. This is the expectation of large numbers of Israelis now in this country. It is not voiced as an idle speculation. The Israeli theory is that war with Syria would be Israel's *last* war, that Israel would stake its existence on it, that if Israel were to vanish in defeat this would be the will of God.

The Israelis, however, do not expect to be defeated. They appear confident not only in their vast military superiority over Syria but that they could defeat the joint forces of Syria and Iraq—which they expect to have to face. One trump card they think to be in hand is that if Iraq becomes deeply involved in war, the Kurdish rising now underway in Iraq would become general. Iraq would thus have to fight a two-front war, with Israeli assistance to the heavily armed Kurds in Iraq's mountains. Israel hopes to fight on only one land front with Syria, and to give aerial support to the Kurds.

It is taken for granted by the Israelis that the U.S. would come to their assistance in case of need. Their thesis, in fact, is that the U.S. would move, probably simultaneously with Israeli military action, against at least one other Arab state—a petroleum producer, of course. What seems to be in their thinking is that Libya and/or Algeria would be the U.S. target. If this thesis is correct, it means that Israel would be almost guaranteed a one-front war with Syria. Egypt, in this context, is not regarded as negligible, but some Egyptian advance into the Sinai, it is assumed, would have to be conceded by Israel even if war were not to occur. Even as Israel races to strengthen its fortifications in the Sinai, diplomatic pressures are all in that direction.

The trouble with this Israeli-U.S. thesis is that it makes unvoiced assumptions which need to be voiced and, in any case, are questionable.

First, it assumes that although Algeria and/or Libya might blow up their oil installations in case of U.S. invasion, the other Arab states not subject to U.S. attack would not do so. It is this idea which underlies America's apparent strategic postulate that the Army Corps of Engineers could restart the oil flow in six weeks or so after the end of the fighting.

This is a very dangerous assumption. It presupposes that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman would sit by quietly, concede U.S.-Israeli victory by proxy, and grudgingly continue to pump out oil to meet the world's needs. This could, of course, occur. The probability, in my opinion, is that it would not occur. The Arab oil producers are not mere merchants intent on extracting the highest possible price for the highest possible quantity of their natural resources. They are—or believe themselves to be—engaged in a crusade, a recrudescence of their days of strength and independence in the days of Saladin. It therefore cannot be ruled out that, if the U.S. successfully invades a single Arab oil-producing nation, all the oil wells, refineries, pipelines, storage facilities, harbor installations, etc., of all Arab oil producers will at once be destroyed.

Unthinkable? By no means. If the Israelis are capable of thinking of one last, and perhaps suicidal, war, why should their cousins, the Arabs, be incapable of similar thought? And if the Israelis and the U.S. are prepared to take the risk of initiating what could become a global conflict, why should the Arabs—once faced with the certainty of defeat piecemeal—give any thought whatever to the consequences upon Europe and Japan if they destroy their oil resources? Those consequences will be the virtual death of the industrial civilizations of Europe and Japan—which, one must assume, are considered expendable in the calculations of

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the Israeli-U.S. war machine.

There are still further possible miscalculations. The problem of the Kurds is not confined to Iraq. There are large—and discontented—Kurdish minorities in the U.S.S.R., Turkey and Iran. A U.S.-Israeli-Kurdish victory over Iraq and Syria would rouse the latent nationalist enthusiasm of these minorities, i.e., would pose an immediate threat of possible risings in Turkey, Iran and the Soviet Union.

Viewed dispassionately, the possibility therefore exists that these three countries would not stand idle while this danger to them was in the making. Turkey and Iran, and possibly the Soviet Union, might be drawn into the fighting to prevent a Kurdish victory in Iraq. This, I believe, has not been thoroughly weighed by Israel, and has not been weighed at all by Kissinger.

Further still, it is to be doubted that Israel could defeat Syria in the mountain terrain of Mt. Hermon unless Israel strikes soon. Israel appears to be at, or very close to, the peak of its military capabilities. Syria is probably not yet at its peak but, with the enormous input of Soviet weaponry and training, grows stronger and more bold day by day.

It is therefore to the advantage of Israel to strike early, as soon as the frost and the spring runoffs are off Mt. Hermon, i.e., no later than the end of May. The terrain would then be favorable for armored attack, with full air support—the necessary preconditions for an Israeli victory in this sector.

In addition, it must not be forgotten that Israel has boasted, not vainly in my opinion, that nuclear capabilities are now featured in its arsenal. Moreover, the U.S. administration has informed Congress of the imminent sale to Israel of 200 Lance short-range ballistic missiles, adaptable for use in nuclear bombardment. Israeli protestations to the contrary, it is against logic to expect the Israelis not to employ their limited number of tactical nuclear warheads if the coming war should go against them, putting them *in extremis* as a nation.

[ON THERMONUCLEAR WAR]

It is here that lies the heart of mankind's military plight. Any use of nuclear weapons, tactical or strategic, to overcome the advantages of Soviet-supplied arms anywhere (or U.S. arms for that matter), could lead to immediate entry of Russia into the conflict. The question is therefore posed whether the coming U.S.-Israeli military gamble against Arabia might lead not only to global war but to a nuclear war (in the full sense of the term) between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

There is at least a 50 percent likelihood of the answer being yes.

This is a change of view on my part from the opinions I expressed in "The New International Power Game" (RAMPARTS, Nov. 1973). The view I then held was that a full nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. would, in effect, annihilate both countries.

I now hold the view that the U.S.S.R. is in a far superior position to survive a nuclear attack than is this country. Western Russia, even for some distance beyond the Urals, and the coastal areas and naval and industrial installations of the maritime regions of Siberia, would suffer total destruction. There would surely be erasure of cities, industries, and transport facilities in many cities, in other parts of Russia. But most of rural Russia, and its population, would survive—and that means that the Russians would survive. A smashed and riven Russia, it is true, but a living Russia nonetheless, measured in terms of surviving mankind.

Russia would have to start its industrial revolution, even its civilization, all over again. The reasonable presumption for the farming areas which did survive is that life would be highly localized, perhaps even as primitive as before World War I when archaic Russian agriculture permitted her to be a net grain exporter to the world. My expectation is that local but extensive political entities would emerge which might, or equally might not, coalesce into larger political unities tending over time to become once more a unified nation in its habitable regions.

I make no apology for presenting in callous and obviously inhumane terms estimates which no civilized human being should ever be called upon to make. The circumstances require that civilized men and women make such estimates. It is, in fact, a badge of humaneness that one engage in these exercises—in public, for others to scrutinize and to reject, modify, or draw conclusions from. For what appears to be in prospect is the antithesis of humaneness. It is malevolent antihumanity at its most despicable. Science and scientists have debased themselves in search of annihilation of the human race. We are in an age of diabolism honored by the mighty, applauded by the multitude. The 60 million dead of World War II are paltry in the counting of today's nations. Deaths by the billion are the possible accomplishment of 1975.

For all that Russia needs to do is to atomize not the cities and the industries, nor even the power stations, but only the power distribution system.

Then the water would cease to flow. Even my home 2,000 feet up in the Catskill Mountains, far removed from any industry other than logging and dairy farming, would be instantly uninhabitable. Our water pump, some 700 feet down in the earth, is electrically powered. We could, it is true, carry water by the pailful from the stream half a mile down the mountainside—if we were not aging, and if we had the strength. But our sump pump, which diverts and discharges runoff waters which otherwise would inundate our cellar and wash away our home's foundations, is also electrically powered. And our farm equipment requires electric power for its repair, maintenance, and use. We might manage for awhile in the forest if our crops were in.

But—a new poverty phenomenon—crop raids have already begun in these mountains, especially of garden produce. There are similar reports from the West Coast. Also, and possibly a portent for the cities as well as the countryside, arson is becoming common. In one recent case, seven buildings in a nearby village were burned down in one night, the arsonists setting another house afire as soon as the volunteer village fire department was wholly occupied in extinguishing an earlier advanced blaze.

If this is already happening in the mountains in conditions not of war but of heightening poverty and tensions,

(Continued on page 59)

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Poems by Erica Jong

STATUE

Cement up to the neck
& my head packed
with unsaid words.
A gullet full of pebbles,
a mouth
of cast concrete –
I am stuck
in a lovelessness so thick,
it seems my natural element.
My mouth closes
on stones.

Hand frozen to my chin,
my back a question mark,
my heart soldered
to its arteries,
my feet planted
in grass that cannot grow,
The Thinker ponders
ten more years of this:
a woman
living the life
of a statue.

Break free!
Melt the metal
in love's couldron,
open doors, eyes, heart,
those frozen ventricles,
those stuck tongues,
those stuttering dependencies.

When the statue walks,
will the world dissolve?
When she shakes her shoulders
will the sky shrug
& skitter off in space?

Or will the clouds cluster
to cover her,
& the blue wind gather
at her shoulders
& the men streak by
like jet trails in the air,
utterly ephemeral?

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INSOMNIA & POETRY

Sweet muse
with bitter milk,
I have lain
between your breasts,
put my ear
to your sea-shell-whispering navel,
& strained the salty marshes
of your sex
between my milk teeth.
Then I've slept at last,
my teeming head
against your rocking thigh.

Gentle angry mother
poetry,
where could I turn
from the terror of the night
but to your sweet maddening
ambivalence?
Where could I rest
but in your hurricane?
Who would always take me home
but you,
sweeping off the sooty stoop
of your wind-filled shack
on the edge
of the volcano?

HOW-TO BOOKS & OTHER ABSURDITIES

Distrusting advice –
there is no one she wants to be
but herself –
although sometimes
she wishes
herself dead.

Who can tell her how to live?
Ms. Lonelyhearts –
with her heap of red letters?
Doctor X. –
with his couch shaped
like a coffin?
Mr. Sex –
gimlet-eyed
cock-of-the-walk,
with his cakewalks & tangos,
his mangoes & bitter persimmons,
his helium balloons
bursting on branches
& his condoms
that glow in the dark?

No.
She turns her back.
Mistakes: she will make them
herself.
Love: she will choose,
like the rest of us,
badly.
Death: it will come
when it will come.

& Life: not reasoned or easy
but at least
her own.

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to be published forthcoming book Loveroot
by Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc. 1975

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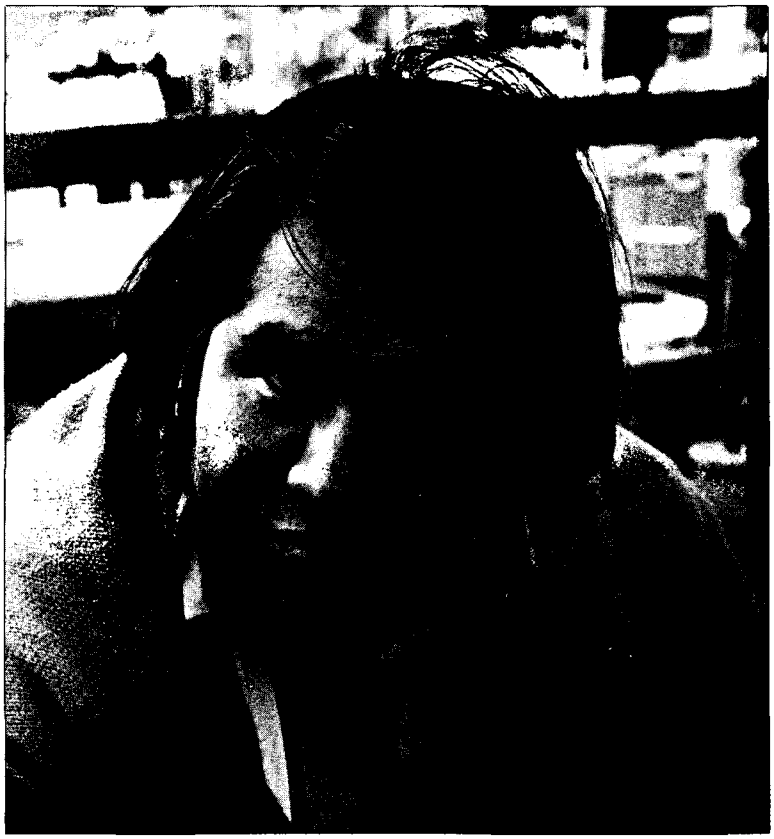

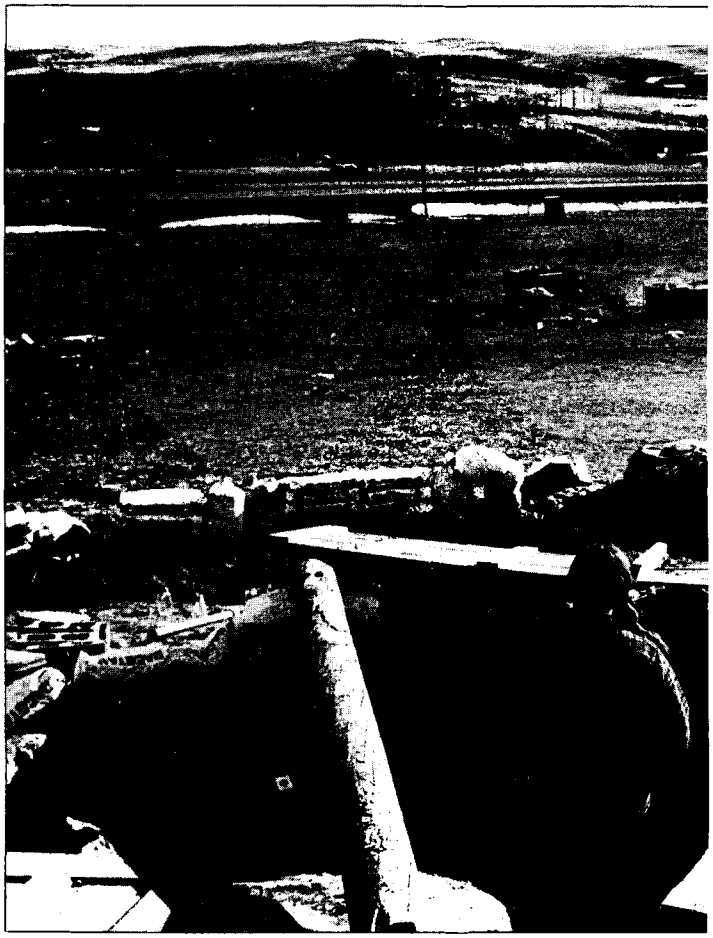

The Indian Movement: Out of a

Indians burst dramatically upon the domestic scene with the invasion of Alcatraz; the rapid-fire sequence of protests and occupations which followed seemed to carry the movement along to an inevitable confrontation at Wounded Knee. It seems difficult to remember that Alcatraz was half a decade ago, while even Wounded Knee, in retrospect, seems like one of the last battles of the 19th century Indian wars. The pace has cooled rapidly since the occupation of Wounded Knee: primarily because many of the activists have been tied down by trials arising from the occupation, but also, perhaps, because of the dilemma of how Wounded Knee can be surpassed using the protest technique.

The contemporary Indian movement was, and continues to be, so many things, that it is difficult to understand what happened, what it meant, and where things are today. Indians seemed to be a natural protest group in the late Sixties: when protest movements began forcing a review of America's historical blunders, no group seemed to have a greater claim to redress than did Indians. If Americans were seeking a domestic focus for their Vietnam frustrations they could hardly have chosen better than the Indians, victims of such 19th century massacres as Wounded Knee and Sand Creek—startling parallels with My Lai. When Dee

Wounded Knee, South Dakota, 1973
Photographs by Michelle Vignes ©

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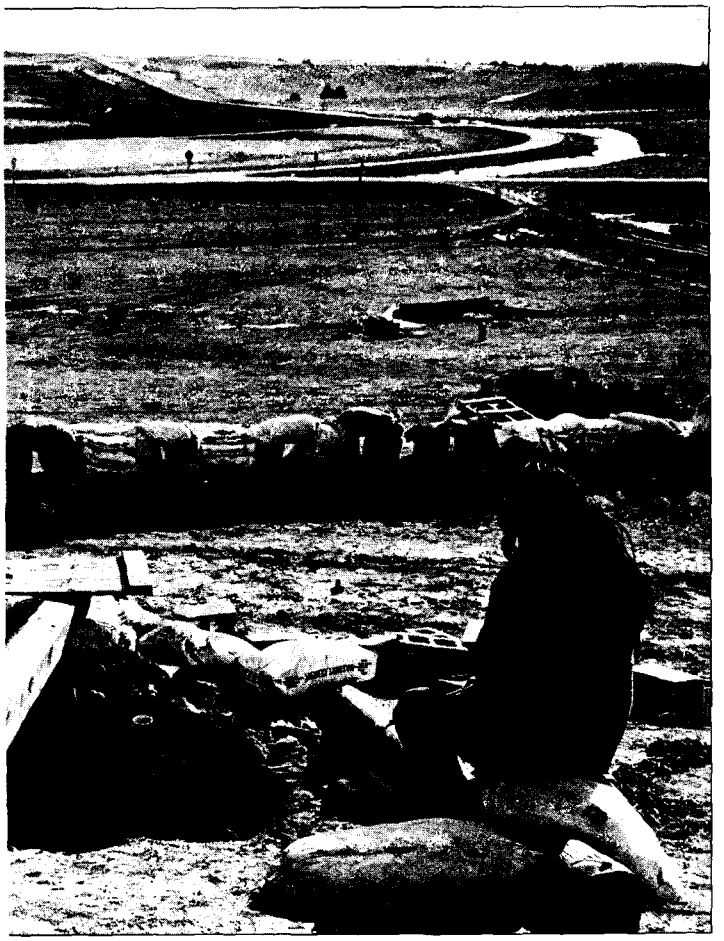

Jack Eisenberg

Vounded Past

by Vine Deloria, Jr.

Brown's classic history of the dispossession of Indians, *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee,* hit the best seller lists, it was apparent that Indians had a temporary blank check to air their grievances.

With the historic mistreatment of Indians fresh in their minds Americans turned to their evening television programs to discover that if anything conditions had become worse for most of America's indigenous population. Suddenly Indians were fashionable, Southwestern Indian jewelry began to sell like hotcakes, and a benign form of radical chic arrived in Indian country. Protests veered from the intention of reclaiming lost lands to dramatizing conditions and symbolizing the discriminatory relationship which had grown up between white society—as exemplified by the Bureau of Indian Affairs—and the descendants of the Indian warriors of old, who had figured in so much of American history.

In reviewing the events of the last half decade we can take any number of viewpoints as we try to understand how deep and how broad the contemporary Indian protest has been. By drawing the analysis as sharply as possible we can perhaps try to establish where the movement is today and project where it might go in the future. But the very process of analysis creates a kind of dissension, since arriving at an accounting involves a determination of wins and losses, while the very essence of a movement is to maintain the semblance of unified momentum in the face of reality.

Perhaps the first phenomenon that we can identify, then, is the very clever response of the federal establishment in warding off the Indian movement from the outset. Unlike the civil rights movement, which generated a certain resistance among federal officials until it proved its moral force and general popularity among private groups such as churches and labor unions, Indians were always fairly popular; federal officials had for years shunted Indians aside by maintaining publicly that they were doing everything possible to help while privately continuing to hamstring the tribes.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Justice Department, and other federal agencies seemed to have planned their strategy long before Indians began to protest. When the cry for self-determination by Indians became loudest, federal bureaucrats were already manipulating Indian politics to get their favorite people installed in key leadership roles. Advisory committees were used to set tribe against tribe, area against area, urban Indian against reservation Indian, and non-federal against federal Indians, so that the movement probably had little or no chance of escaping cooptation by the federal government.

Cooptation worked because the movement began on the assumption that there was a federal policy, or at least that there was someone at the controls in Washington, and that protests would effect change by placing pressures against the formal government structures. It seems, however—again looking at events in retrospect—that there really never was a federal policy for dealing with Indian problems. Indian problems and policies were in fact the province of numerous and nameless bureaucrats, none of whom had any desire to do more than keep the natives quiet, or at least to keep them off the front pages.

Indians hit the governmental structures like divers hitting a pool of marshmallows, and in spite of the best efforts of everyone, the marshmallow worked. No matter what proposals Indians put forth for reform, the government found a way to blunt them—by half-heartedly carrying out

Top Right: Trail of Broken Treaties demonstrations, Washington, D.C., 1972

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Indian demands or by making it appear that reforms would be forthcoming pending a reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In the past five years we have had three commissioners, all Indians, who have pledged reform and reorganization as a means of fulfilling Indian demands. But in fact policy-makers higher up the ladder have never really wanted change and the bureaucracy has moved into the vacuum, thwarting even the feeble reformist efforts of the latest commissioners.

There are certainly many places, events, and policies of the last few years where Indians could probably have done much better than they did. But over the long term the staying power of an entrenched bureaucracy is so much greater than the stamina of an outside movement that it probably wouldn't have made much difference if we had won some more battles in different areas. The fundamental problem of Indians, understanding and dealing with the federal bureaucracy, has not been solved.

[A SENSE OF IMPENDING DOOM]

Yet paradoxically, Indians in the last decade would seem to have had more success than the environmentalists, the civil rights movement, consumer activists and other citizen constituency groups. Applying strict standards of judgment to the Indian movement, judging accomplishments on the basis of fundamental laws controlling Indian life either passed or blocked—until recently the standard by which many people evaluated Indian affairs—we can state that Indians in recent years have had fairly good success, at least until 1974. In the last five years the Taos Pueblo had its Sacred Blue Lake restored to it. The claims of the Alaska Natives, pending over a century, were finally resolved. Disputed lands taken by other government agencies in the early part of the century, such as those at Yakima and Warm Springs, have been returned. The Menominee tribe, which had been terminated from federal supervision, was restored to full federal services in 1973.

In the courts Indians have had a number of unexpected successes. The fishing rights struggle in the Pacific Northwest, which featured seemingly endless litigation and protest, resulted in a landmark decision in *United States* v. *Washington* (1973) in which the treaty fishing rights were upheld. Several very important income and sales tax cases were won and Indians held their own in the very important field of water rights. Cases on affirmative action in employing Indians were decided favorably (although the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been working hard to negate the effect).

To be sure, the record of legal victories won by the Indian movement, both in litigation and legislation, is very impressive, and when one considers the complexity of the field the success of Indians seems to be little short of miraculous. No corresponding five years in American history has seen so many Indian legal victories in so many fields. In remembering some of the hesitation and reluctance of Indians to fight some of these battles, or recalling how few people really worked to resolve the issues, the result does seem incredible. I can remember when the movement to restore the Menominees consisted of one or two people meeting to make plans and rally support.

Yet as the movement approaches its crest, one still feels a sense of impending doom because of the long-term nature of Indian problems with the federal bureaucracy. No satisfactory definition of either individual Indian rights or the rights and status of tribal governments has been worked out during these years and in these two areas there is a great need for new concepts. On the issue of how much self-government a tribe may exercise, neither thinking nor legal concepts have progressed since the introduction of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934—outside of various undependable policy changes by the different administrations. Reform of tribal governments is a very touchy area. The situation on the reservations is neither as bad as the activists would have it nor as good as the incumbent tribal chairmen would see it, while the competency of the various tribal governments varies from one reservation to another. What many Indian people have refused to consider is the history of the different tribes and reservations; many tribal governments today are hampered more than they realize by events and policies of the past.

So while short-term victories have been impressive, many of them have been built upon the intensity of the white man's guilt and not on the permanent improvement of the legal status of Indians. Today tribal governments have a great deal of freedom because of the discretionary use of federal rules and regulations and not because of any fundamental change in their legal rights. The peril of this situation becomes clear when Indians try to consolidate their gains now that the feeling of white guilt has begun to wane, and the mass of white citizens finds other causes to champion. Things that seemed reasonable and just when events were moving at a fever pitch are suddenly neither new or reasonable when the emotion dies.

Moving from the legal field to the area of raised public consciousness, an avowed goal of the activists early in the movement, one could say that Indians achieved and perhaps even surpassed their wildest dreams. A substantial number of people have become aware of modern Indians and of that number perhaps a majority of sympathizers have learned a great deal about Indian history and about American history from the Indian side. If the moral arguments of American history had to be made, and they did, we could not have chosen a more eloquent historian than Dee Brown, whose chronology of the Indian wars shattered traditional views of manifest destiny and seemed to neutralize any discussion of the inevitability of American standards of historical morality. Coming at a time when the contemporary generation of whites was questioning the foundation of America's view of itself, the Indian movement forced the issue of what America had really been and who, in view of the disclosures of history, contemporary Americans really were.

[STALLED IN ITS OWN RHETORIC]

It is precisely at this point that the Indian movement seems to have stalled in its own rhetoric. Profound and sometimes heated discussion has been rocking Indian country concerning the Indian identity. Activist groups seem to maintain a strong sentiment that a return to traditions is imperative, and raise a broad range of ques-

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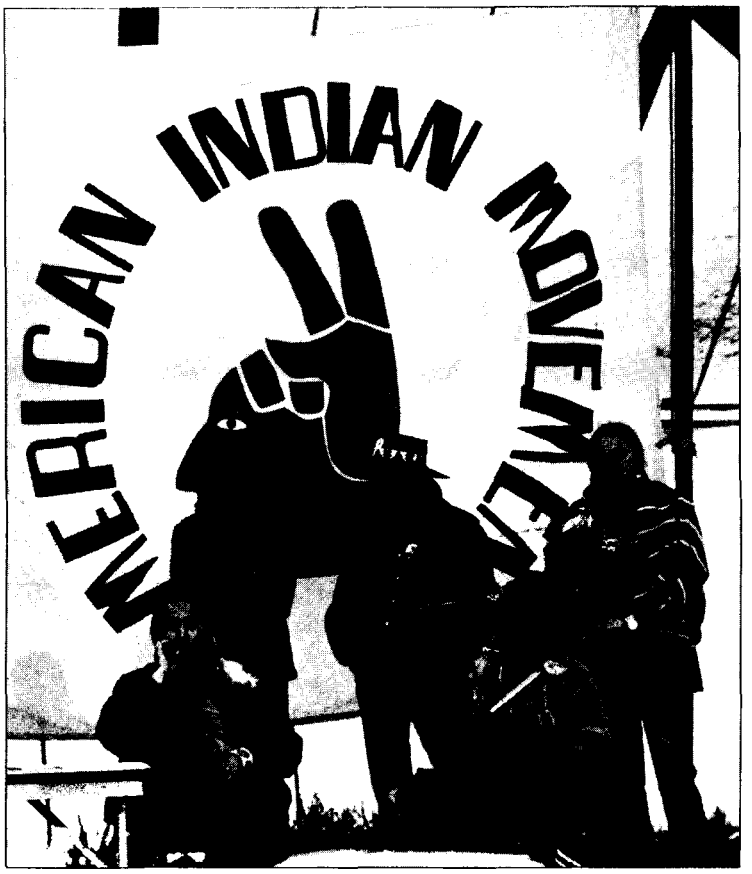
A.I.M. Conference, Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, South Dakota, June 1974

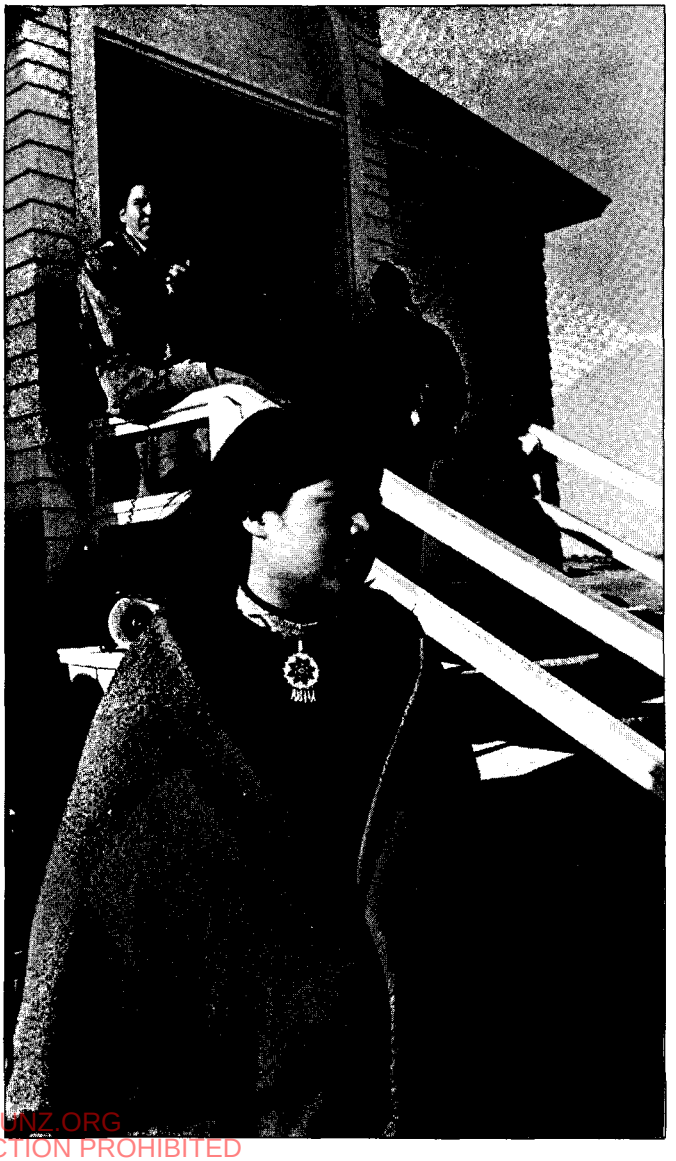


tions about how Indians can really return to the old ways or stabilize Indian communities by evoking virtues of former days. The most devastating accusation against anti-Indian Senators and Congressmen has been that they are trying to extinguish Indian culture, and few people in Congress have ever wished to face this kind of attack while trying to reorganize the legal status of Indians. The cultural argument has thus been the most potent counterattack for trying to prevent the federal government from abandoning or "terminating" the special position of Indians.

Yet it must be apparent to everyone, and particularly to Indians, that times have indeed changed, and with that change have come irreversible shifts in cultural outlook. Today we make pottery, carve wood, and carry on many crafts traditions for the tourist trade. We do not use very many of those products ourselves. We have telephones, go to college, buy cars, and have jobs, and do a great many things that were simply absent in the old culture. In many ways Indians participate in the contemporary technical culture as much as other Americans. But very few Indians have come to realize how drastically this change affects the responsibility of their community as a whole to participate in the formation of a new American identity.

Time and life-styles have changed very rapidly in recent years and the Indian life-style—predominantly rural and perhaps even similar to contemporary folklife-style—is not as exotic as Indians would like to think. While we have been attacking Anglo-Saxon culture as represented by the older generation of white Americans, the immediate past generation of whites has created a new life-style which is quite compatible with many ideas and customs once advocated by Indians alone. Thus as we have worked to sensitize white America a part of it has made a quantum jump toward our original cultural position.

What may be the tragedy of contemporary Indian existence is the seemingly continual failure of Indians to recognize the change in America's post-Vietnam identity. If Indians are to survive the rapid cultural change that the rest of society is making, the Indian community will simply have to allow some of its members to develop their talents and



Wounded Knee, South Dakota, 1973

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contacts with the rest of American society. Today there is a feeling of betrayal and jealousy among Indians whenever another Indian attempts to relate to contemporary developments. Individual Indians attempting to succeed at any field unrelated to the general conception of Indian life—be it folksinging, small business, scholarship, or professional careers—come under tremendous pressure from other Indians and are the object of undeserved ridicule and suspicion. They face accusation of trying to be "better" or "smarter" than other Indians.

The result of this in-group attitude is that an increasing number of younger and educated Indians are becoming discontented at being unable to use their minds and talents in developing their careers as individuals. An unarticulated restlessness exists in Indian country: talented Indians, afraid of social pressure, do not contribute their best efforts toward either the solution of Indian problems or the leading of all Americans to understand the great similarity of Indian dreams and the dreams and goals of other citizens.

[A TRAGIC CONCLUSION]

The problems of joining in the formation of a real American identity are apparent in the field of Indian education. The new momentum in Indian education began in 1960, as Indians cast off the old stereotype of the "savage" who was "good with his hands." Indian education has made great progress in nearly every field. Indians now control nearly 90 school boards ranging from primary schools up through community colleges and the Navajos in particular have telescoped a century of educational progress into a mere 15 years, creating their own community college and numerous Navajo-controlled local educational institutions.

No one knows the exact numbers but reasonable estimates would place nearly 25,000 Indians in college or post-high school educational courses—an astounding figure given that as late as 1960 there were probably not more than 2,000 Indians in higher education. Today there are probably that many Indians in graduate courses, a substantial number of them in law school and medical school. Considering that there are only about 800,000 Indians in the country and over half of them are under 18 years of age the educational phenomenon and its ensuing problems become even more intense.

Where are all the educated Indians going to go? A traditional complaint has pointed to the lack of Indians in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. At the current rate of educational expansion, the bureau could soon be manned totally by Indians, with a continuing supply of educated Indians still to be placed. For some time government jobs have been considered stepping stones to other employment; and new organizations in the private sector have provided jobs for a substantial number of educated Indians. But as the economy declines, unemployment may cause considerable disruption in the Indian community.

Still, the current success of Indians in the field of education has been indisputable, and much of it was directly related in one way or another to the activist ideologies. The invaders of Alcatraz were college students and many of the proposals of the recent protests originated in the generation of Indians now in college. Yet the very success of Indians has created some severe problems which even participation in the movement as an activist cannot solve. Never has a minority group had to absorb so many educated members in such a short time as have Indians in this past decade. Much of the apparent confusion among Indians today is simply the process of adjusting to this massive change while trying to cope with political and social problems of long-standing duration.

Despite their successes, and the buoyant optimism of many Indians about the future of the movement, prospects for the future are bleak, and a great many Indians denounce the visionaries of that future as disloyal to the community. Yet it does not take a prophet to project the extent of the crisis which Indians face. Looming on the horizon are two world problems—famine and energy—which may combine to crush the best efforts of Indians to continue moving forward.

The guilt which white Americans have lavished on Indians in recent years is rapidly being transferred to world famine. And the need for energy, when it really comes, will demand that the government find a way to confiscate energy resources on Indian reservations. Guilt vanishes fast in a chilly office building in an energy-sparse urban society. Both of these crises are moving into center stage much faster than affluent whites can comprehend and while Indians are at least aware of the energy crunch very few are able to comprehend how the sight of starving millions on evening television will affect the attitude of American society towards its own poor and hungry.

Perhaps the movement could be saved or could cushion the shock which it must face if Indians could understand their role on the world scene. Continued isolation on cultural grounds and withdrawing from participation in domestic movements will simply result in making the vanishing American vanish once again. The Indian experience of oppression, concentrated in the past, but still present on many reservations and among urban Indians, is simply not as devastating as what the world will probably soon experience.

At present Indians show no sense of understanding the crises that are galloping onto the American foreign and domestic scene. Instead of reconciling old differences, forgiving ideological heresies, or seeking out new allies on the domestic scene, many Indian leaders seem to want to remain aloof from current problems and continue to recite the sins of the white man and the non-Indian activities of the current crop of activists. Unless the movement forgives itself for being too successful and concentrates on the consolidation of a new and better definition of America's responsibility to American Indians, the movement may well degenerate into a fratricidal struggle for declining federal dollars and public attention—a tragic conclusion to a struggle that has come so far in such a short time.

Vine Deloria, Jr., a Standing Rock Sioux, was born in Martin, South Dakota, a border town on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Formerly Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians, he is the author of Custer Died for Your Sins *(Delacorte).*

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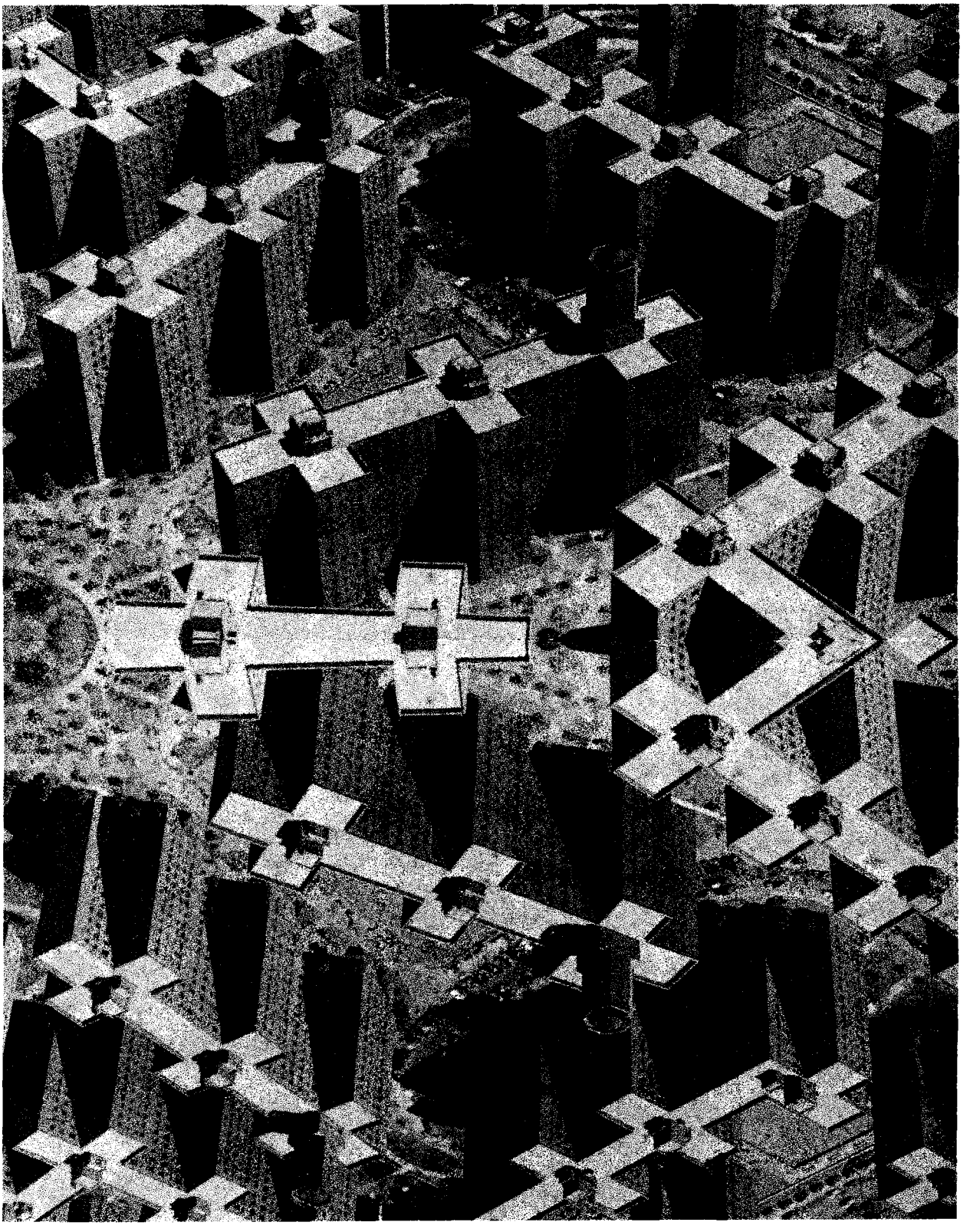

BUILDINGS ARE JUDGMENT

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. . . or "What Man Can Build"

"The current fiction is that any overnight ersatz bagel and lox boardwalk merchant, any down to earth commentator or barfly, any busy housewife who gets her expertise from newspapers, TV, radio and telephone, is ipso facto endowed to plan in detail a huge metropolitan complex good for a century. In the absence of prompt decisions by experts, no work, no payrolls, no arts, no parks, no nothing will move."
—Robert Moses, replying to Robert Caro, *The Power Broker**

"I've had to save you. You are interrupting my plans now. . . . Never mind. I'll carry out my ideas yet—I will return. I'll show you what can be done. You with your little peddling notions—you are interfering with me. I will return. I . . . ."
—Mr. Kurtz, in Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

"What sphinx of cement and aluminum
bashed open their skulls
and ate up their
brains and imagination?
Moloch, whose buildings are judgment!"
—Allen Ginsberg, *Howl*

* *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York,* **by Robert Caro, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1974, 1246 pp., $17.95.**

The political and cultural storms of the Sixties enabled Americans to expand their minds in a great many marvelous ways. In some ways, though, our collective consciousness seems to have contracted and shrunk. For instance, it seems virtually impossible for Americans today to feel or even imagine the joy of building, the adventure and romance and heroism of construction. The very phrases sound bizarre; you probably wonder what's the joke. Think of your gut response when you encounter something being built—a building, a road, a bridge or tunnel, a pylon or pipeline, a television tower, anything—your first impulse will almost certainly be to shrink back in fear and loathing. This impulse cuts across class, ethnic, generational and ideological lines: try it on your friends, your enemies, your parents, yourself; you can even try it on workers who depend on building for their bread and butter. It's true, but not really relevant, that most of what's going up today is both shoddy and brutal: our recoil is too fast and too visceral to make discriminations; even on the rare occasions that something beautiful gets built, we cannot see to see. We tend to think that everything around us must have been indescribably lovelier "before"—before it got "developed." We idealize the past of our whole environment, the way Scott Fitzgerald idealized his primeval Long Island—"a fresh, green breast of the new world"—paradise, till Man came and ravaged and ruined it with his parking lots.

Our contempt for construction is so immediate and instinctive today that we hardly even notice it. In fact, however, it is relatively new; at least it is new as a cultural consensus, radically different from the consensus of a generation ago. Of course, it may not last, or it may turn out to be only an undertow rather than an overthrow. Still, we need to understand where it came from, how it happened, what it means. How have we come to condemn the process and products of construction as emblems of everything we find most destructive: massive ugliness, sordid venality, outrageous windfalls of wealth, endless storms of dirt and noise, big plans laying waste little people's lives, organized viciousness without redeeming social value? How have millions of people who have never heard of Allen Ginsberg

by Marshall Berman

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come to share his vehement judgment against the spirit "whose buildings are judgment"?

When I read Ginsberg's *Howl* at the end of the Fifties, his anguished vision of "Moloch, who entered my soul early" struck close to home. When Ginsberg asked, who was the "sphinx of cement and aluminum," the demon that devoured as it built, I felt at once that, even if the poet didn't know it, Robert Moses was his man. For Robert Moses and his public works had a very personal resonance for me. He had come into my life just after my Bar Mitzvah, and helped bring my childhood to an end, when he rammed a highway through the heart of my neighborhood in the heart of the Bronx. When we had first heard about the Cross-Bronx Expressway, early in the Fifties, nobody believed it, it seemed absurd, unreal. In the first place, hardly anyone I knew had a car: the neighborhood itself, and the subways leading downtown, defined the flow of our lives; the very idea of an expressway seemed to belong to some other world. Besides, even if the government needed a road, they surely couldn't mean what the announcements seemed to say: that the road would be blasted directly through us–and, in fact, through a dozen solid and settled neighborhoods very like ours; that more than 60,000 people, working and lower-middle class, mostly Jews, but with many Irish, Italians and Negroes thrown in, would be thrown out of their homes. It couldn't happen here, we thought: after all, this was *our* government, America, not Russia, right?

The Bronx of those days still basked in the afterglow of the New Deal: if we were really in trouble, we were sure our pantheon of liberal saints and heroes–Eleanor Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, Senator Lehman, Governor Harriman, our young reformist Mayor Wagner–would come through and take care of us in the end. And yet, before we knew it, trucks and cranes and immense machines were there, on top of us, and people were getting notice that they had better clear out fast, or else; they looked numbly at the wreckers, at the disappearing streets, at each other, and they went. Moses was coming through, and no political or spiritual power could protect the Bronx against him. For seven years the center of the Bronx was pounded and blasted and smashed. When the dust of construction finally settled, and the exhaust fumes began to rise, our neighborhood was depopulated, economically depleted, emotionally shattered–as bad as the physical damage had been, the inner wounds were worse–and ripe for all the dreaded spirals of urban blight. Thus Moses gave me, and thousands of other New Yorkers, a crash course in the Dynamics of Power: what got built, and how, and for whose benefit, and what happened to the people who happened to be in the way.

Moses was in the fullness of his power in those days. Everywhere you looked, he was building something: a dozen expressways all over the state, slashed through the heart of the city and the country, leveling both; high rise housing for literally hundreds of thousands of people, austerity barracks for the poor, opulent whited sepulchers for the richest of the rich; dozens of schools; a convention hall that loomed over Central Park; the biggest cultural center in the world at Lincoln Square; a new World's Fair rising on the ruins of the old; Shea Stadium; at the mouth of New York Harbor, the city's gateway, the world's largest suspension bridge; far upstate, along the Canadian border, reaching a climax at Niagara Falls, the world's greatest complex of dams and power plants. And all these projects were little more than beginnings for Moses, foundations on which to build more.

[BIGGER THAN LIFE]

What kind of man was this Moses? What made him tick? Where were the springs of his colossal energy and audacity, his monstrous pride and arrogance, his insatiable will to build up and tear down? I found myself obsessed with the man and his works. As I grew up, and got a liberal education, my head filled up with a gallery of titanic builders and destroyers from literature and myth and history, in whose company Moses might belong; Gilgamesh; Ozymandias; Louis XIV, creator of Versailles; Pushkin's Bronze Horseman, the enormous statue of Peter the Great that loomed over the Imperial Capital he had built, and that, generations after his death, menaced Petersburg's citizens and drove them mad; Ibsen's Master Builder; Baron Haussmann, who razed so much of medieval–and revolutionary–Paris, and created the boulevards and vistas of our romantic dreams; Bugsy Siegel, master builder of the underworld, who created Las Vegas, and was killed for it; "Kingfish" Huey Long; Mr. Kurtz; Citizen Kane. It was a strange but genuine Great Tradition. The paradigm that struck me most forcefully was Goethe's *Faust*, that bible of the German bourgeoisie from which Moses sprang. Goethe's Faust is an intellectual who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for superhuman powers, but who feels fulfilled only when he gains the power to build–to irrigate and develop an arid and barren coast, to make the wasteland bloom and open it to human life–and to murderously do away with the people in his way. It was hard to think about Robert Moses without mythicizing him: like the immense hulks he built, he looked and felt bigger than life.

Moses himself was always glad to supply the public with archetypes in case our imaginations should run dry. He could come on like a great American gangster, racing around in fleets of black limousines, going out of his way to transgress speed limits, street lights, rules of the road, boasting that "Nothing I have ever done has been tinged with legality." Or he could appear as an unreconstructed Soviet Commissar, proclaiming to the world that "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs!"* He could even sound like the legendary Oriental despots, serene in the totality of their power, free to let their magnificent malignity hang out: thus, unlike most men of power, who characteristically use language as euphemism and smokescreen, Moses would bluntly say that "when you operate in an overbuilt metropolis, you have to hack your

*** This motto, which appeared on huge signs along Moses' Long Island Expressway, and which was meant to explain the detours and troubles caused by the construction of his 1963 World's Fair, obligingly documented the Convergence Theory that American and Soviet ideologists were trying so hard to bury. The fact that Moses professed a fanatical hatred for Communism–he had ruined many opponents with McCarthyite smear campaigns, and often threatened, "I'll let the *Daily News* loose on you!"–only made the convergence more ironic.**

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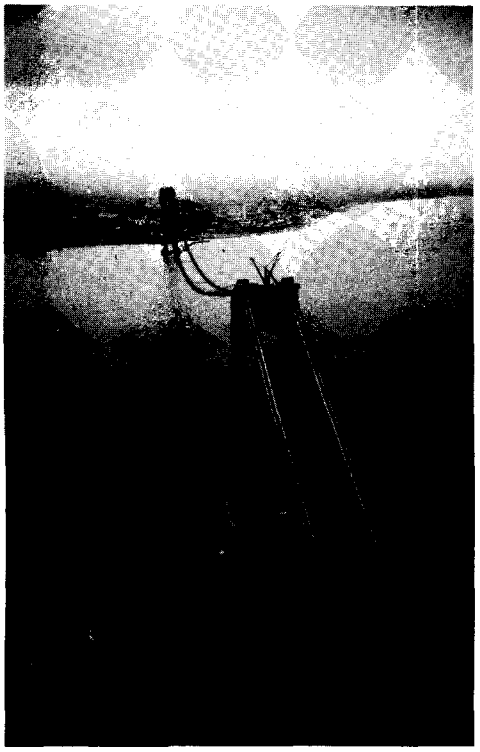
way with a meat ax." You could make no mistakes about that. But Moses could also mobilize self-images that were beneficent and benign. When he planned to turn the city dump in Flushing Meadows into an enormous park, he dressed himself as the prophet Isaiah, and asserted Jehovah's mandate to "give unto them beauty for ashes." After his park was underway he would often say that he was the man who had seized Scott Fitzgerald's Valley of Ashes—the ash heaps between Long Island and New York City, which became, in *The Great Gatsby*, a brilliant symbol of our civilization's industrial waste and human hell—taken the Valley of Ashes, and transformed it into a symbol of natural beauty and human delight.

Over the years, I came across many New Yorkers who were as haunted by Moses as I was. We would watch his projects being built, trade rumors and references along with fantasies and myths. Where did his vast power come from? How had he begun? What demonic inner forces drove him on? There was one incredible story about what might be the Rosebud of this Citizen Moses. The rumor was that he had never learned to drive—and had taken his revenge by making himself Detroit's man in New York and forcing everyone around him to drive everywhere. (I never believed it, but *The Power Broker* discloses that the story was true after all.) What was he going to do next? We racked our brains to anticipate his next move, before this Great Dirt Mover (as he liked to call himself) literally grabbed the ground out from under our feet. But he kept himself miles and years ahead of us, because we never learned how to "think big." Could people be aroused to fight him? Was there any way he could be stopped? As the Fifties ripened slowly into the Sixties, we schemed and dreamed.

[LOOKING FOR A MYTH]

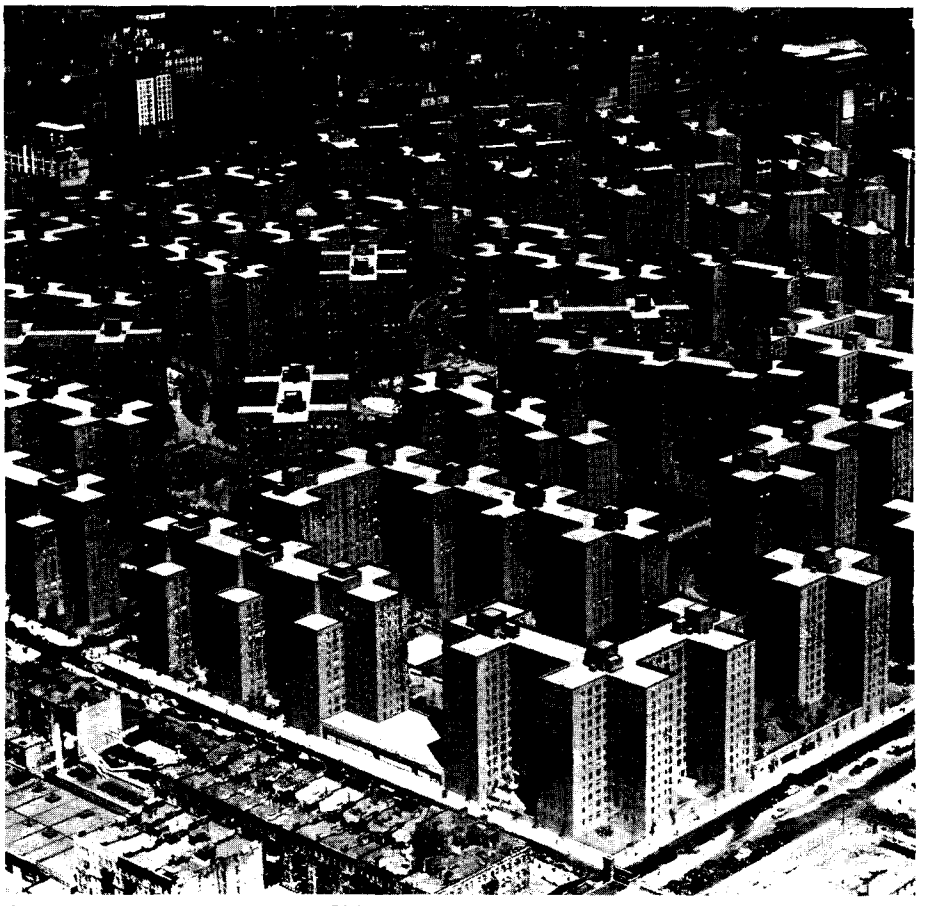
Now, in the stagnant Seventies, with the appearance of Robert Caro's remarkable book, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, this builder of colossal monuments has finally gotten the monument he deserves. *The Power Broker* is, quite simply, the best biography we've had in years: the best, I believe, since Isaac Deutscher completed his life of Trotsky a decade ago. It is the most exciting American book on the city since the works of Paul and Percival Goodman, Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs, in the glorious sunrise of the early Sixties. Caro has learned a lot from these writers; he uses their varying ideas as the foundation for a brilliant critique. I doubt that any American public figure has ever been exposed to such sustained, relentless, thoroughly devastating scrutiny. Caro piles up all the goods that anyone has ever gotten on Moses, adds new indictments of his own, analyzes and synthesizes the evidence trenchantly, seems to leave nothing out. He dredges all the interlocked secret sources of Moses' power up from their murky depths. He shows us, in concrete and shattering personal detail, the human costs of Moses' greatest works—he has even tracked down some of the refugees from my dear, devastated Bronx, urged these long-scattered and forgotten people to tell their stories, a new dimension of history that will live alongside the highways for a long time to come.* He unearths old stories, rumors and intimations of

*** It is striking that, in what was probably Moses' cruellest and most humanly destructive project, fellow Jews were his victims. The fact that Caro, also a Jew, is telling the story now may be a symptom of an important shift in American Jewish self-awareness. Alongside our glowing "only in America" success story, we may be slowly coming to confront a darker story that could be entitled "*even* in America."**



Verrazano Narrows Bridge, N.Y.C.

Photography for Industry Photos



Stuyvesant Town and Cooper Village, N.Y.C.

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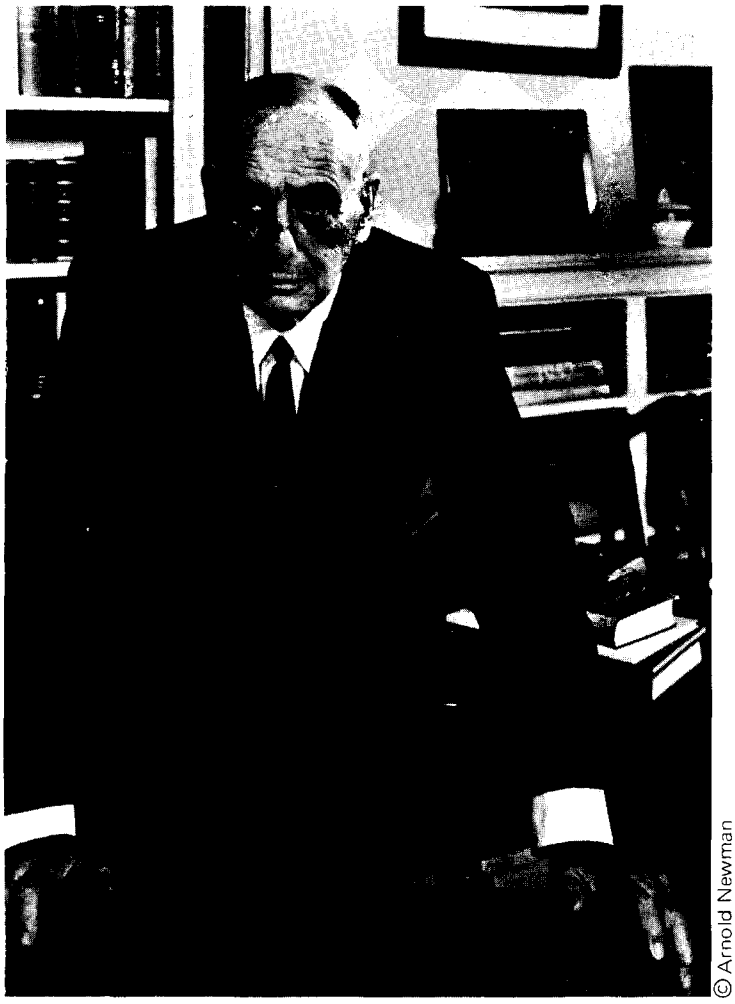

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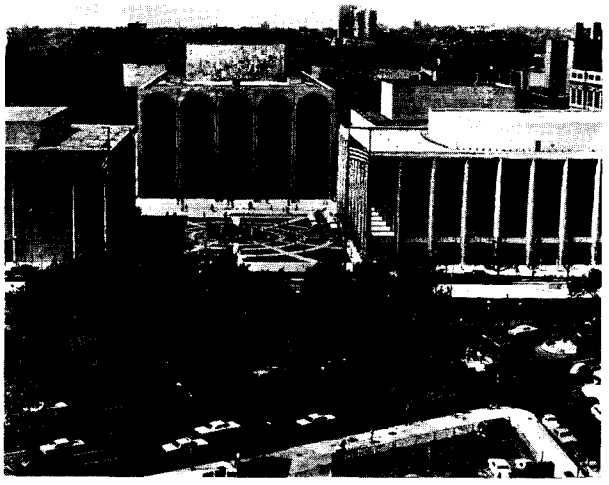
long-buried sexual, financial, and emotional betrayals. He calls up every ghost, plays back every hushed or shrill voice that might haunt Moses' nights.

Sometimes Caro gets carried away by a righteous rage, and loses all sense of perspective and proportion. Does he really think that public works before Moses, or in cities other than Moses' New York, got built without plenty of payoffs to pave their way? Or that those other builders gave a damn for the feelings or lives of the people in the way? And who really cares if Moses used public funds to hold lavish banquets, or to subsidize Guy Lombardo? Or who was that lady people saw him with, that winter in Florida? At times Caro sounds as obsessive and insensitive as he accuses Moses of being; and this sort of overkill will probably create a backlash of sympathy for the man in the box. Still, when Caro has put it all together, so much of the larger record is clearly appalling that even Moses' most ardent supporters will recoil. Like every Moses monument, *The Power Broker* is ruthlessly destructive—only this time it is Moses himself who is in the way. The critical insight and power of this book post a warning to all our leaders, a sign that those master builders "whose buildings are judgment" must themselves face judgment, probably a lot sooner than they would like to think.

But there is a whole other dimension of Caro's book, a dimension that accounts for much of its huge size, but also for much of its originality and dialectical complexity and emotional force. This is a dimension that reaches back into the 19th century, into the tradition of Balzac and Dickens and Dreiser and I. J. Singer, the masters of the great epic urban novel. Caro plunges us into the stream of Moses' historical and psychic world, immerses us in its energy and

Above: Robert Moses
Left: Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center, N.Y.C.



UPI

Above: World's Fair, Flushing Meadows, N.Y.C.
Left: Shea Stadium, N.Y.C.

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"A decade after Mario Savio urged fellow Americans to Stop the Machine, many machines are stunningly silent. After a quarter century of socially enforced manic mobility, many Americans are freezing their souls. If this is the way history takes care of itself when people Think Small, it makes me feel nostalgia for people who Think Big."

vitality and human promise. In a series of dramatic narratives—marvelous *stories*, of a kind that neither historians nor novelists today seem to want to tell—Caro makes us feel the urgency and enormity of the challenges Moses had to face, engages us in the intense pressures and thrills of his work and achievement. He forces us to recognize reluctantly that this thoroughly dreadful man is one of the authentic heroes of our time. If we take the plunge of empathy, and let ourselves be carried along on the flow of Caro's narrative, we will come to see that Moses is probably one of the greatest heroes of modern construction. We may not want to see such a thing—who needs such heroes? Who needs such complexity? But if we don't grasp his heroism, we won't understand his villainy either. We will take his story for a simple melodrama, when in fact it is a complex American tragedy that embraces not only Moses himself, but our whole society, whose most creative and most destructive impulses he has acted out so well; a tragedy in which we ourselves turn out to be implicated, a lot more deeply than we think.

The old boys (and old girls) of the New Left—the Slightly Used Left is what we should call ourselves today—will probably find it especially hard to make an empathetic leap into the world of heroic construction. Heroic *de*struction is a lot more up our alley: our typical heroes are men and women who smash idols of false belief, subvert and explode corrupt institutions, overthrow murderous governments, tear down the great structures of evil in the world. We do not need to be told that, in Bakunin's words, the urge for destruction can be a creative urge—this we know only too well. To imagine that the urge for *con*struction can be creative would be far more authentically radical for us—that would really shake our sense of the world to the roots! I will let Marx do a little of the shaking. Here he is, in the first part of the *Communist Manifesto,* enthusiastically praising the bourgeoisie: they have "accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts and Gothic cathedrals." These bourgeoisie, as Marx exposes and explains them, are a brutal and banal ruling class. Nevertheless, he insists, they have "accomplished wonders" in construction. Not only have they built a multitude of beautiful and useful structures in a remarkably short time; what is crucial in the long run is that, by virtue of the brilliance and energy of their building, they have been "*the first to show what man's activity can bring about*" (my italics). It is ironic that this vision, so dear to Marx, should be a lot closer in spirit to Moses, who claimed to hate everything Marx stood for, than to the New Left, which burnt endless candles at Marx's shrine. But if Karl Marx and Robert Moses can share a vision of life that we reject or ignore, we had better find out fast what we are missing. *The Power Broker* can bring the romance of construction back to life for us, and show us how Moses brought that romance to its greatest flowering in American history; at the same time, by following Moses' genius where it led him, Caro can show us how and why the romance died. If we can somehow recover the radiance of this lost love, it may be the beginning of a deeper recovery. It may help us give a new life to our lost sense of larger human possibilities, to our feeling for "what man's activity can bring about." We of the Slightly Used Left know too well that radicalism without this sense of possibility is dried up at the roots and busy dying.

I want now to trace the movements and explore the meanings of Moses' life and work, to draw from this enemy of the people the elements of the master builder, a heroic myth we need so badly to rediscover. I will use Caro's narratives and analyses for my framework. However, where Caro tends to overemphasize Moses' personal biases and idiosyncracies—this danger is inherent in the whole enterprise of biography, and hard for even the best to avoid—I want to emphasize the currents of social and political and cultural change that underlie Moses' career. It was only because Moses knew instinctively and profoundly how to exploit the historical flow, that he was able to build and achieve so much: to bring together within himself the most contradictory and explosive forces in American life—all our heroism and all our nihilism—and to express these contradictions and act them out in 50 years of public works.

[AN AMERICAN EPIC]

Robert Moses' life story is one of the great American epics of success and achievement. At the same time, like few other American success stories, it is a fulfillment of the archetypal intellectual's dream, dreamt for centuries from Plato to Mao, of a synthesis of theory and action, vision and power. Caro shows how hard Moses had to fight, again and again, for every foot of ground; still, when we look at the outlines of his life as a whole, we can see how many roads were cleared for him from the start. Moses was born in 1887, into a wealthy German-Jewish family, at precisely the moment when the upper crust of German-Jewish immigrants were making themselves felt in American life. The first generation of *Our Crowd*—the Warburgs, Guggenheims,

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Belmonts, Strauses, Gimbels, *et al.*—had made their mark by amassing immense private fortunes remarkably fast, in the early spring of America's spectacular commercial and industrial growth. The brightest and most imaginative among the second generation, growing up in the mansions of Fifth Avenue or the brownstones off Central Park—Walter Lippmann, Herbert Lehman, A. L. Kroeber, and J. Robert Oppenheimer—aspired not merely to inherit the earth (their share had already been set aside before they were born), but to civilize and humanize the rich, rough country that they had come to call home. This usually went along with ignoring or (like Moses) aggressively denying their Jewishness, and striving to pass themselves off as pure Americans or Universal Men. More admirably, it meant dedicating themselves to lives of "public service."

Moses was given the very best education a young aristocrat could get: Ethical Culture, Dwight, Yale, Oxford, Berlin, Columbia, private tutors, the Grand Tour, the Mona Lisa, the Stones of Venice, the Acropolis by moonlight ("All Europe contributed to the making of Mr. Kurtz"). Everywhere he went, people were struck by his brilliance and energy, by the passion and boldness of his will to change the world. Even those who loathed him (and there were always plenty) could see that he was headed for great things. The only question seemed to be what portion of the world he would choose to change.

Moses' first choice was bureaucracy and public administration. Caro resurrects a phase in Moses' life that is generally unknown or forgotten, but important: his career as an administrative reformer. He lost his first battle, a bold plan to recast New York City's 50,000-person work force in the mold of a comprehensive "merit system." (This fierce struggle of almost 60 years ago prefigures our current intense and unresolved conflicts over standards, quotas, expertise, class and ethnic bias.) Moses was defamed, demoralized, and driven from the city. But his intellectual power and political courage were remembered, and before long he was recruited for bigger things. Al Smith, a Tammany Hall backroom politician whom no one took very seriously, was about to embark on his career as the greatest state governor in American history. A child of the Lower East Side, Smith felt and understood the horrors of the industrial age, and he was determined that the government should do something about them. The federal government of those pre-New Deal days lurched from gutlessness to overt reaction, so the states were America's only source of hope for social reform. But New York's state government was organized to systematically stifle these hopes. Smith saw that this system had to be changed, and he saw Moses as the man who could show him how.

As the head of Smith's State Reconstruction Commission, Moses confronted a labyrinth of 187 departments with obscure powers, overlapping jurisdictions, conflicting mandates. Policies were made behind closed doors by the upstate farmers and Wall Street bankers and businessmen who controlled (and still control) the legislature in Albany. There wasn't even a state budget, public funds were divided up in private, the government was impenetrable, and there was no way for the people to know where their money was going or what they were paying for. The governor, elected by the people, had no real power to protect or promote the public interest. Progressive laws might occasionally be passed, but the bureaucratic machine inevitably ground them into dead letters. Moses cut through the labyrinth, and showed how to consolidate this Kafkaesque structure into a few big agencies whose powers and responsibilities could be clearly defined. The governor's powers were to be substantially enlarged. Most important, he would be given the power to prepare a unified state budget—which meant, in effect, the power to weigh conflicting priorities, define comprehensive public policies, and translate them into action.

Moses' plan can be attacked for making the state executive far too powerful; and it is easy for readers today to sympathize with critics of executive power. Nevertheless, we need to remember—and it is easy for a post-New Deal generation to forget—how may important pieces of social legislation in American history have had to be rammed by a strong executive down corrupt and reactionary legislators' throats. Al Smith used the powers that Moses had helped him obtain to push through a remarkable series of laws, throughout the Twenties, that laid down a solid foundation and an agenda for a welfare state: minimum wage and maximum hour laws, standards for industrial safety and working conditions, equal pay for women in education and public employment, vastly enlarged facilities for public health. Moreover, once Smith was able to control the reorganized bureaucracy, he could see to it that his program was not only passed, but actually enforced. FDR, who succeeded Smith as governor of New York, would later extend his structure and his program to the nation as a whole—though the agenda of social legislation that Smith envisioned half a century ago is still far from complete. Caro is skillful in drawing our attention to this achievement and in bringing out some of its ironies. Moses always loathed the sweaty masses, and never gave a damn about social welfare, yet the welfare state could never have come into being without the kind of structural reforms he worked out. Here, as throughout his career, he served the people well in spite of himself.

[OPEN SPACE AND WILD SURMISE]

Having helped to lay out the structure of the welfare state, Moses went on to pioneer what would turn out to be one of its crucial functions: the building of public works. In this second phase of his career, he became famous as a creator of parks. The building of urban parks in America, which accelerated with the work of Olmsted in the middle of the 19th century, was submerged and lost in the flood tides of swelling population, massive immigration, breakneck urbanization, explosive and violent industrial growth, that swept through the country in the generation before the First World War. Moses got interested in parks at a moment when fresh air and open space in the cities were disappearing day by day, just when a whole new multitude of people needed them most.

Early in the Twenties, Moses began to explore Long Island. He fell in love with the island, which reached from

(Continued on page 50)

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The Canadian Way
No Exit?

by Edgar Z. Friedenberg

I have been living near Halifax, Nova Scotia, and teaching at Dalhousie University, for nearly five years now. At the end of the fifth year, in August 1975, I shall be eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship which, if granted, would terminate my American citizenship, for the American people are a jealous prince—Canada, like Britain, accepts dual citizenship but the United States does not. This is an even greater step than most Americans believe.

Emigration, in any case, is a difficult act for most Americans to imagine—like suicide, it is embarrassing to those left behind who prefer to believe that it must have been undertaken while of unsound mind. That, surely, is what President Ford's highly publicized repatriation program for war resisters—amnesty, it isn't—is intended to convey. Resurrection on these terms has not proved attractive to many; and, certainly, if I am as fortunate in my *ambience* in the next world as I have been to find myself in Nova Scotia, I shall conclude that God is merciful indeed, though perhaps more merciful than just.

It has often been pointed out, as by Jessica Mitford, that Americans deal with their abhorrence of death by pretending that it is not really a major change of condition, and that the cemetery is a kind of suburb with a very low rate of violent crime and everybody on perpetual care instead of welfare. Emigration is a riskier business altogether; yet Americans think the change will be minimal for those who are only moving to Canada. Those of us who chose to leave the United States because we found its social and political policies both repugnant and deeply rooted in the nation's structure and its culture are unlikely to have made this error; if we had thought Canada would be like the United States, we would never have come here. But for most Americans emigration is unthinkable and Canada a political artifact, available as a refuge only because of the conservatism or cowardice of the people who lived in the region in 1776, but essentially similar in its customs, economic if not political institutions, and basic values.

There is just enough truth in this to be highly misleading. True, in nine of the ten provinces the natives mostly speak English; we shop in supermarkets in shopping centers; and even the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), though a Crown Corporation,* depends on frequent and awful commercials for its short-range operating costs. True, Canadian entrepreneurs are often brasher and more vulgar versions of their American contemporaries; Sinclair Lewis

*** The American analogue of the Crown Corporation is usually called an Authority, like TVA; though the U.S. Postal Service is now operated in this way, the Canadian is not.**

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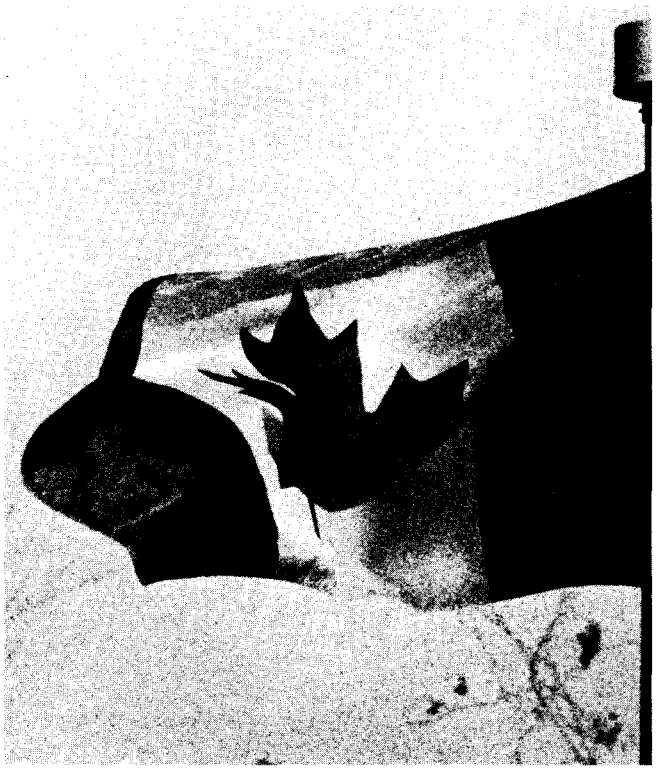

characters held over miraculously for half a century. But life here *feels* totally different from the way it does in the United States; and while not all the comparisons are favorable to Canada—and whether any will be depends on what you want from life—no American who comes here to stay is likely to doubt that choosing the path less traveled by has made all the difference.

[CAVEAT EMIGRANT]

There are certain qualities of life that Americans are likely to miss in Canada, and these are real deficiencies. I found it especially embarrassing, having meant my departure from the United States as a political gesture as well as a search for a better life, to be forced to confront the fact that Canadians enjoy far fewer and weaker formal civil liberties than Americans do. Less than three months after my arrival here, Prime Minister Trudeau had invoked the War Measures Act which suspended most civil liberties in the country for 90 days and legalized horrifying if temporary detentions *incommunicado* of key political figures in Quebec at a time when the perfectly lawful separatist *Parti Quebecois* was campaigning for seats in a general election. The episode that led to this proclamation was atrocious enough: the murder of a government official and the kidnaping of a British diplomat in Quebec. But the motivations of the Liberal Government seemed to me clearly political and it was not reassuring to discover that 90 percent of the Canadian people approved while John Mitchell, then U.S. Attorney General, spoke enviously of Mr. Trudeau's powers in combatting subversion. By the time the 90-day period expired, however, the media—more elitist here than in the United States and with no Spiro Agnew to harass them—had made the government's action the butt of ridicule; the detainees, terrifying as their experience had been, had long since been released; the actual criminals who had murdered M. LaPorte and kidnapped Mr. Cross had been given safe conduct to a reluctant Cuba; and the conspiracy trial undertaken by the Crown was well on its way to ignominious collapse, occasioned by the acquittal of all but one of the alleged conspirators who, as the press acidly pointed out, could hardly be convicted of having conspired with himself. The government, in short, blew it. The most serious permanent victims of the invocation of the War Measures Act were some American war resisters whom the infamously authoritarian government then in power in Vancouver—3,000 miles from Quebec—arrested and turned over to American authorities.

Nevertheless, it is shameful that this could happen here and did. Canada did not even pass a Bill of Rights until 1965; and it is only statute law, not a part of the Constitution and not paramount. That is, it does not automatically, as in the United States, preempt the authority of other statutes in cases in which there is a conflict. Each must be decided on its merits before a notably conservative judiciary, and the tiny if fairly scrappy Canadian Civil Liberties Association does not regard it as very useful. In Canada, moreover—and this I find really shocking—there is no principle of law forbidding double jeopardy; the Crown may, and in important cases does, appeal against an acquittal, and the accused may find himself convicted in appellate court. I could give further examples, all favorable to the United States on balance; but what they add up to is the

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fact that Canadians, by and large, retain a measure of basic trust in their government and have never defined it as a potentially lethal adversary against which formal and formidable defenses must be vigilantly maintained if liberty is to be preserved. I think they have learned a lot and become observably more militant during the past few years. But it must be recognized, too, that Canada did not become a nation by rejecting the authority of a putatively tyrannical government, as the United States did. It assembled itself, nearly a century later, out of colonial fragments subject to that same government, to which the United Empire Loyalists here, though by now reduced to a few nests of elderly WASPs (remarkably like the Daughters of the American Revolution), remain fiercely devoted. Upper Canada, as what is now Ontario was then called, had its revolutionary moments in the early 1840s when William Lyon Mackenzie led an unsuccessful revolt against the entrenched Orange aristocracy of the region. But there have been none since the nation itself was formed a quarter of a century later. The ongoing separatist movement in Quebec is fueled by a degree of revolutionary sentiment; but Quebec remains the eastern stronghold of the ruling Liberal Party–which is why the War Measures Act was invoked to forestall the erosion of this indispensable base of the *status quo*–and Lower Canada's three centuries of Jansenist tradition have left a legacy of rural Catholic cultural conservatism that has not yet been dispelled, though it is waning.

Canadians, then, have had less practice than almost any nation in the world in learning to view their government as a real or potential evil from a consistent ideological point of view. And it has, indeed, never possessed the power to distinguish itself as an independent source of evil in the world. As Barrington Moore, Jr. pointed out in his *Reflections on the Sources of Human Misery,* nations with relatively small resources are likely to deceive themselves as to the possibilities of survival in the world while behaving decently in foreign affairs, since they are protected by the dirty work of the major power of which they are a client. That protection is dubious in that it leads to their involvement in their Godfather's affairs; but it also tends to keep them from getting blamed. Canada has been notoriously supportive of American interests in the Indochina war while maintaining a posture of moral superiority that war resisters have found most convenient. The result has been that it is seldom blamed for its complicity in American aggression, and its people have been permitted to retain certain liberal beliefs –I should say illusions–about the possibility of using government to further the interests of social justice that few Americans can still hold.

This is changing. The two major Toronto dailies have recently completed a major exposé of incidents of police brutality in that city; instances of collaboration between Canadian security forces and the CIA are now regularly exposed and readily acknowledged. Canada, unlike the United States, has an Official Secrets Act which permits government bureaucracy to conceal by investigation–that is, it creates a commission to study anything there is a public outcry about and then sits on the report which cannot be lawfully published even if somebody leaks it. But this no longer works very well. Since December 1971, when the independent journal *Canadian Forum* published substantial sections of the Gray Report–the name refers to its author rather than its style–on the domination of the Canadian economy by foreign investment after the government had withheld it for six months, aggressive reporting, especially on the CBC, has been much more notable in Canada; and though Canadian officials still waffle and procrastinate, they are having to come to terms with a rising public willingness to confront them, and a growing tendency to regard them, like politicians in the rest of the world, as unindicted co-conspirators. Their image, and perhaps their reality, is very vulnerable, since an even higher degree of collaboration between industry and government has been acceptable here than in the United States. Leftish Americans tend to regard Canada, enviously, as a nourishing hotbed of socialism; but the Canadian willingness to undertake through Crown Corporations services that in the United States would be left to private enterprise has

Separatist movement demonstration, Montreal. Sign reads "The white niggers are revolting"

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Changing of the guard at the federal parliament buildings, Ottawa

worked largely to further private interests. Even the Government of Nova Scotia operates a public corporation called Industrial Estates, Limited, whose established function is to fund new or faltering private enterprise in the interests of creating jobs and developing the economy, thus legitimizing in this country what always seems to have to be done apologetically as a special case in the United States, as in bailing out Lockheed or Pan Am. There is also a Federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion, created in April 1969, which funds "incentive grants" to private industry at a rate up to $30,000 per job created in parts of the country deemed economically undeveloped.

If Canada moves toward a more genuine socialism, which seems to me both probable and necessary, the officials associated with these programs may find themselves, like those who worked for the CIA and its conduits in the United States in the late Fifties and early Sixties, the victims of rapidly changing social norms. In both cases, the affected cadres may claim quite justly that what they were doing was generally regarded *at the time* their programs began as not only morally justifiable but as highly progressive and well to the left of prevailing public opinion, which was one reason for being reticent about it. In matters of political morality, however, hindsight takes on a peculiarly persuasive quality; and it becomes very difficult to believe that reasonable men ought not to have known what they were doing. The subverters of Chile soon find themselves, like John Mitchell, *enchiladas;* and the men who thought they were building the economy by encouraging private investment, meanwhile establishing themselves as sound men in the minds and hearts of Canada's liberal industrial leaders, are increasingly accused of giving the nation's resources away to private investors and even supplying them the money to invest. The misconduct, however gross it may appear, that results in political scandals seldom turns out to have been greatly in violation of the norms that prevailed at the time the scandalous behavior began. What happens is that politicians fail to notice that norms have changed, since they surround themselves as far as possible with like-minded lieutenants; and they cannot in any case extricate themselves from long-range commitments that are proving disastrous. Canada, I rather think, may be heading into a series of such storms. Though by American standards they will be tempests in a teapot, tea is still an important beverage here as it was, in earlier days, in Boston. Canadian officials have long been lulled by lavish allotments of legitimacy; their withdrawal symptoms may be rather ugly.

[A QUALITY OF LIFE]

All this has been meant as a form of stipulation: let it be agreed, before the discussion proceeds, that this is not only an imperfect nation, but that there are no formal grounds for regarding it as a society morally superior to that of the United States. Nor do immigration patterns suggest a consensus on this point. While, for the past few years, the absolute net balance of migration between the two countries has been northward, a far larger *proportion* of Canadians still emigrate to the United States than vice versa—though growing restrictions on immigration to either country in response to economic difficulties of the Western World are making such comparisons meaningless as indicators of how people feel. Nevertheless, invigorating as I find visits to the United States to be, I have never returned to Canada without an immediate and substantial sense of improved well-being. This is not euphoria, such as I used to feel going back to the University of California at Davis during my first two years there, before the sheer malevolence of the government of California and the Regents of the University freaked me out—such a rich and beautiful place, and so promising. Returning to Canada from the United States is more like the first fever-free day after a hectic illness. I just want to relax and feel sustained by a lower-keyed and more humanly-scaled environment. This is true even when I am not coming from New York, but from rural northern Minnesota, where I was on my last journey to the States. It isn't that the place is so crowded; it's the way the people come on as if the world were an

Canadian Government Travel Bureau

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unending convention and they had one eye on your name tag to see if you were important, because they had no way of knowing from listening to what you said, which they had no intention of doing anyway. The first thing I notice when I come *to* the States is that my assumptions about conversation which work in Canada are naive there. In Canada, if people ask you a question, they wait for you to answer it—though, as I have indicated, if you are a government official they may grow impatient after the first six months. In the United States, they don't; they interrupt you to talk about something else if you try.

In part, this really is because there are too many people; even if the particular scene you're in at the time is not crowded, the people who are there have trained themselves to compete against a very large and competitive field and act accordingly. The experience of American cities today is really something else; and to encounter it raises some rather curious and unexpected questions in my mind about basic democratic polity, akin to the questions abortion raises in the minds of Catholics concerned about the soul of the fetus. Were *all* these people really endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights? If so, what did they do with them? And what was the instrument by which so priceless an endowment was conveyed? Can you really count on copulation to do that, every time, even though this is rarely the intent? It doesn't seem to be working out.

Canada, which makes more modest promises and arouses lesser hopes, is less riven by anguish and torn by rage, though there is quite a bit of petty malice. Anger is not the basic context of life here; indeed, there is too little; the people have been trained to be too docile. Canadian schools are even more oppressive than American schools, though physically safer; and this is the first year since I've been teaching here when my students, even in the University, have mostly felt free to talk back. (Maybe they're just beginning to really believe I like it; maybe, too, we're on a different part of the curve from the United States, where reports from the campuses indicate that there is now widespread satisfaction among administrators at the diligence and grade-grubbing of the students of the Seventies. The editors of *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning,* the professional journal, or house organ, of the American university industry, to take a notable example, often sound like *Rigoletto* exulting over the assassination of the wicked Duke, before he looks at the body.)

For the first few years here, I was quite impatient with what seemed to me the passivity of the Canadian people in the face of obvious exploitation by local elites and by Americans acting through them. Meanwhile, as usual, everything was changing including me. Canadians were getting more impatient and outspoken, and certainly no one would accuse them today of being docile in their attitude toward American domination, real or fancied. And I was coming to see that I had misinterpreted a vital aspect of Canadian socialization. What I had taken for docility was not just the consequence of having been trained to inhibit one's resistance to authority—though there is still too much such discipline. It is also the consequence of *not* having been trained to believe that one is, or ought to be, the master of the universe, to whose technical wizardry in the social and natural sciences all difficulties should yield. Americans, I am now frequently informed, are freaking out in large numbers because they are increasingly aware that they do not know how to solve their social problems: poverty, unemployment, racism, crime in the streets. But in Nova Scotia, these aren't problems; they're what we've got; though not, as with nicer things, in quite the abundance that Americans have come to expect. Nobody expects them to go away. Meanwhile, our lives go on; our friends drop in, not unexpectedly; they may not phone but, then, we are familiar with their habits. Most of the people we deal with know who we are.

Not much of this, I am sure, can be true of Toronto or Vancouver. Yet even these cities are still coherent in a sense in which major American cities no longer are. Toronto just re-elected, sweepingly, a mayor who had earlier sponsored a bill limiting new construction to a height of 45 feet, against the opposition of a powerfully organized construction industry; while New York City, the last I heard, had not even been able to regain from the State the authority to inspect nursing homes and condemn them for violation of health and safety regulations. Canadians are not good at Final Solutions but they are much better at defining and attacking specific and legitimate problems. Indeed, one of the greatest threats to the Canadian way of life lies, I think, in the fact that Canadian success in solving problems within the limits of its political system may lead Canadians to retain their faith in liberalism, and even Liberalism, until it is simply too late, in a time of apocalypse, to resolve pressing moral dilemmas related to welfare and liberty. The Canadian system of social services is so much more fully developed than the American that it is difficult for most people here to realize either how inadequate it still is—that is, how poor the poor still are—or how much it has encroached on individual freedom already. The social-worker mentality can be a real threat to the freedom not only of the poor here—as in America—but to the middle classes as well. A declining faith in legitimacy may lead the body politic to develop a healthier resistance to the meliorist intrusions of authority; but it cannot take the place of a genuine reassessment of social priorities in which the claims of welfare and of liberty are coolly contrasted. This has never been done in either Canada or the United States, which has suffered a precipitous loss in the physical quality of life without compensating gains in either community or individual freedom—indeed, it is the simultaneous loss of all these things that is terrifying. To many Americans, this terror manifests itself as a fear of becoming the victim of senseless violence; but violence is a perfectly sensible way of treating objects you do not value, and whose possible humanity does not concern you; especially in a society that has always cherished violence as an instrument of political coercion and legitimized it until its institutions lost their power to legitimize anything. Nothing has happened, or will happen, in the streets of New York that William Butler Yeats did not predict in a single, familiar poem—though one might have expected a more impressive rough beast than Gerald Ford, his hour come round at last, slouching toward Washington to be born.

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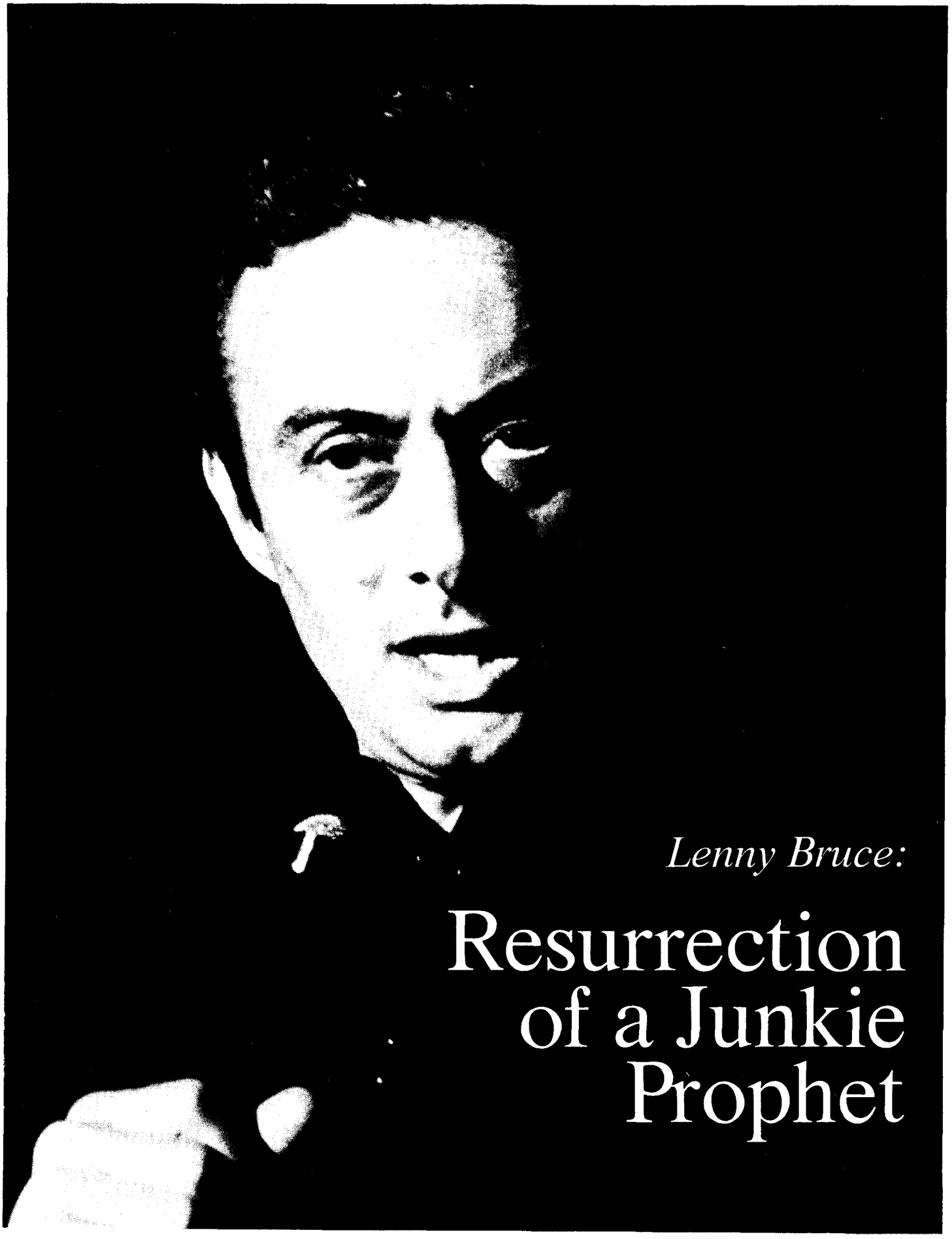

Lenny Bruce:

Resurrection of a Junkie Prophet

by Andrew Kopkind

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"Lenny Bruce was not so much a genius at comedy as a forceful actor—on stage and off. He was the first famous dropout of the Sixties: a star who threw it all away not really to prove a point but to prove the pointlessness of it all."

Lenin is said to have once defined "reactionary" as someone who worships dead revolutionaries. That condemns most of us to the last ranks of the rear guard, and it aptly characterizes the creators, actors, and audiences of *Lenny,* a worshipful documentary cartoon about Lenny Bruce, a revolutionary dead these eight-and-a-half years. The reverence and respect laid on *Lenny* is no less impressive than the veneration given to a painting of Washington crossing the Delaware or a statue of Lenin himself at the Finland Station. Those heroes and their revolutions are solidified in history like flies in amber. We keep them near us not as inspirations but as talismans. We can see them whenever we want, but their movement is stopped and all that is apparent is their outsides.

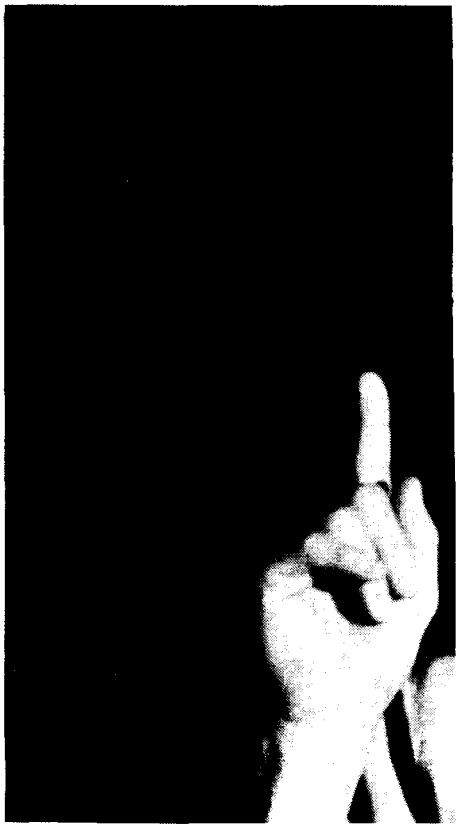
The real Lenny Bruce's life was an event in the history of radical culture in America, as well as an episode in the development of comedy. From beginnings as a lousy Jewish "comic" whose jokes were soggier than the *knaidlach* at the Concord, he created a raucous and raunchy style that turned tastelessness into high humor. He hacked at the sacred American myths: Jackie Kennedy who "hauled ass" out of the car in Dallas to save herself, Eleanor Roosevelt who had the "most beautiful tits in the world," Pope John who was a closet Jew, Little Orphan Annie who tricked with Sandy, and the Lone Ranger who made it with both Tonto and Silver. Not much was left to love.

For his offenses against propriety, patriotism and the Puritan ethic, Bruce was harassed by the law and hounded by the arbiters of bourgeois taste. He was busted for obscenity three times and for narcotics. *Time* magazine, among others, diagnosed his sensibility as "sick." But by the early Sixties he had gathered a reputation and a following that marked the breakout of beat art into mass culture. If you accept the validity of such milestones, the Underground began with Bruce.

In August 1966, shortly after an acid trip into the valley of the shadow, Bruce OD'd on heroin, at which point the shadows freed the mythic Lenny from his historic corpse. His phonograph records, a paperback of his best routines, and one live performance film were remaindered at a low level of cult interest (and sales) until just recently, when a new wave of enthusiasm for Bruce broke on the next generational shore. America is now up to its *pupik* in the Lenny-glut: the play *Lenny,* its movie adaptation, the live performance film and a documentary made a few years ago are all on the boards this week. Goldman and Schiller's biography, *Ladies and Gentlemen, Lenny Bruce!!,* has just gone into paperback and is best selling all over town. Bruce is suddenly a presence again in our lives.

How faithfully these several media artifacts convey the essence of Lenny Bruce is an important issue: not for Bruce, who is eternally nodded out, but for the Underground consciousness which he awakened. The print biography is complete and complex, if somewhat too frantic for its length: it's tempting to race through Lenny's life, but at 802 pages the marathon ceases to be enjoyable exercise. The performance film is, by its nature, only a fragment of the story, although it is both funny in itself and a useful reminder of the reality of Bruce's manner. Julian Barry's play is abstract and distorted in crucial ways, but deliverance of the old Bruce bits is compelling stuff and more intensely affecting than any of the other incarnations available.

Against all of that, Bob Fosse's movie version is a disappointment: not just because it is a mediocre job of filmmaking, but because it will now define and describe Lenny Bruce and his comedy for all those who have no means to know better. What they see is a trendy, liberal, middle-class, gentile translation of a life and an art that was perverse, radical, lower-class and



unassimilatedly Jewish. Anyone who is unfamiliar with Bruce will find it difficult to understand—from Dustin Hoffman's post-*Graduate* portrayal of the artist as a sincere and bewildered naif—how he could have been considered the threat he was.

But Lenny Bruce was threatening to "square" America (at least to those square Americans who encountered him) precisely because of the qualities which Fosse, Hoffman, and scenarist Julian Barry deny. Bruce had his antecedents (Sahl, Shelley Berman), his contemporaries (Joseph Heller, Vonnegut) and his descendants (R. Crumb, Dick Gregory, the Fugs, the Firesign Theater). But he was not simply a point on the continuum of humor from Milton Berle (the "Sherman Hart" of the movie) to Monty Python. Fosse makes Bruce into an example of a trend, responding to history like a gag-writer to current events. In the Fifties he wears a tux, cuts his hair short, and performs the old yucks to bored audiences of burlesque-goers. In the early Sixties he dons a turtleneck shirt and mod suit and lectures on civil rights to effervescent tablesful of scrubbed young couples. Finally, he becomes a freak, all bearded and

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scruffy, and propagandizes crowds of college students on the evils of the System and the atrocities in Vietnam.

That is Fosse's cartoon, but it conforms neither to the truth about Lenny Bruce nor to the integrity of history. Bruce both outstripped his times and fell behind them, in his own life no less than in his humor. There was no simple progression from ignorance to revelation; he always worked both sides of the contradictions.

Today we would call him a committed sexist. "Chicks are different," he told his audiences, and his wife and his girl friend felt him act out that belief. It is said (by Valerie Perrine, his wife in the movie, among others) that he despised women: and it has been offered in argument that his wife, his mother, and his daughter—three women—were the only important people in his life. The argument does not necessarily contradict the proposition. Those women were immensely important to him—in their wifely, motherly, and daughterly roles. But they were still different, which made it "natural" for men to have casual sex and unattached lives, while women were "emotionally involved" and trapped in dependencies. He routinely (a bit *too* routinely) made "fag jokes" that only occasionally made the same points about the oppression of homosexuals that he made in every story, no matter how outrageous, about blacks, or Vietnamese, or just plain *schlemiels.* But the long (and tiresome) tirades about the injustices of the justice system went far ahead of the radical analyses of his day, and he saw clearly the banality of tolerance before Marcuse made the notion academically fashionable. He also savaged his own liberal lawyers ("the Jews in the ACLU") who would save the system by accepting its rules, even while challenging the application of them.

But he accepted the circumstances of show business when he felt it was important for his career. For example, he tells the audience in the live performance film (made during his second-to-last gig) that he would never play-act masturbation gestures because it would be "offensive to chicks" and bad for his image. He seems harried, angry but reasonably glued together at the late point in his life. But at the same point in Fosse's film, Hoffman's Bruce is falling into advanced neurotic dysfunction.

The neatness with which Fosse describes Bruce's rise, decline, and fall obscures the real radicalism of his life and thus the force of his act. Bruce was not so much a genius at comedy as a forceful actor—on stage and off. He was the first famous dropout of the Sixties: a star who threw it all away not really to prove a point but to prove the pointlessness of it all. He could have had it both ways; he could have been as concerned with the First Amendment as the movie makes him seem and still he would keep up his club schedule, maybe even a talk-show appearance, or a gig on Ed Sullivan. *"Feh!"* as his Aunt Mima, the Jewish seagull, would scream: it's not important. "Words are my weapons," he said, but he was wrong, and it shows how little Fosse, Barry, and Hoffman know about him that they take his words seriously. His life was his weapon. Words are words.

It wasn't the dirty words that got Bruce into trouble, but his way of presenting himself *around* the words. What it came down to was a question of perspective: "a lot of shit with a little art in the middle, or a lot of art with a little shit in the middle." If Dustin Hoffman had been a stand-up comedian in 1960 he could have said "cocksucking" in a crowded night club and no one would have made it into a federal case. Hoffman is a nice middle-class boy of Jewish extraction. Bruce was not nice, not middle-class, and not of Jewish extraction. He was a smart-ass lower-class "Jewboy," which in combination with a dirty word like "cocksucking" was enough to get him busted.

I can't imagine a worse choice for Lenny than Dustin Hoffman, who gives his usual first-rate performance of himself, with all the limitations that that role entails. Hoffman will never be half the *mensch* that Bruce was, never as seedy and soulful and full of spite; even Al Pacino (who reportedly wanted to play Bruce) would have been more "Jewish" than Hoffman.

Class is crucial in the movies: not just in the portrayal of the lives of people in distinct layers of society, but in the attitudes which filmmakers and actors bring to their work. Just as white people make white movies about blacks, so middle-class people make

Dustin Hoffman as Lenny Bruce

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middle-class movies about those below (and above) them in social status. Perhaps that's all very obvious, but it struck me in *Lenny* how important those class attitudes are in choosing between realities, in evading issues, in creating particular visions of the world.

Fosse and his crew smooth all the bumps, tie up all the loose ends, and by the end of the movie rationalize all the contradictions of Bruce's life. The crucial scenes of lesbianism (involving a threesome with Lenny's wife, her girl friend, and Lenny as voyeur-participant), shooting-up and death are so glossed with fancy camerawork and arty direction that they lose the important quality of shock and the necessary capacity to frighten the audience. The entire movie is executed in a mock "documentary" style, which concludes with a *cinéma-vérité* death scene—jerky camera and all—that is all cinema and very little *vérité*.

In this third movie of his (after *Sweet Charity* and *Cabaret*), Bob Fosse has been almost universally applauded for his directional brilliance and his technical proficiency, which Pauline Kael declares to be "prodigal." For me, Fosse keeps getting in the way of Lenny. His handsome direction is too smart, his careful style is too clever by half. Set pieces like the opening shots of Perrine stripping and the later sex-trio look like sequences shot for the stills and destined for *U.S. Camera Annual*.

In one night club scene, silhouetted heads of waiters and customers bob in front of the camera, which is focused on a long shot of Hoffman "on stage." The silhouettes presented a curious effect: for a moment I thought that people in the movie theater were passing through the projection beam. I looked around, recognized the illusion, and then watched Fosse do his silhouette trick again, and again, and again. When I later saw the live performance film, I noticed that someone had *inadvertently* crossed in front of the static camera to create the original silhouette image. But it happened only once. It was enough—and it was spontaneous.

Quasi-documentaries always teeter between being gripping and hokey, and Fosse is never securely on either side. He shoots in fashionable black and white—an aberration allowed only to Hollywood's certifiably prodigal directors—and intercuts scenes from Bruce's life with snatches of realistic "interviews" with his mother, Sally Marr (Jan Miner), his wife, Honey (Perrine), and his agent (Stanley Black). It's the old *Citizen Kane* gimmick, of course, but this time the biographer is tape-recording his enigmatic subject instead of writing it all down in a note pad. Only the technology is fresh; the gimmick is growing stale.

The documentary metaphor is further extended by cutting scenes from Bruce's fictionalized life against bits from his club routines, e.g., his concern about Honey's lesbianism is followed by his routine about "dykes." The purpose no doubt is to illustrate for any dum-dums in the audience that art follows life (or is it the other way around?), but the effect is to annotate Bruce's act with annoying exegeses, like those Bibles where long and lyrical passages are compressed into simple topic sentences at the margin: "Jonah is swallowed by a whale," "Christ is born in Bethlehem," and so on.

Perhaps this is all too hard on Fosse. Gossip from the set had it that trouble plagued the production all the way, with conflicts about Hoffman and a record amount of out-take footage. *Lenny* is not a despicable movie: it just doesn't measure up to the importance of its subject.

The British critic Kenneth Tynan wrote, on the occasion of the 1960 opening of the London club "The Establishment," that no cabaret of political satire ought to count itself a success unless a third of the audience gets up and walks out of each performance. By that reckoning, Lenny Bruce was a success. For although his life was no cabaret, it was his own act of political satire, and most of his audience left him long before his self-imposed curtain scene. It was his fault as much as theirs—it always takes two to stage a walk-out—but that too was part of the necessary *mise-en-scène*.

Bruce put his body on the line for the great cultural revolution of the American Sixties, a political event of mixed blessings to be sure, but now a recognized historical development. I think that his greatest contribution was existential; that is, he dug it and did it when that was not only unpopu-

Lenny Bruce at the Club Renaissance, West Hollywood

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lar but unfamiliar: hence insane, "sick." But he also made important advance gifts of style and substance to what became known as the Underground.

For one example: he conveyed and to an extent translated jive talk and the cool mannerisms of black musicians into the square and straight white world. And to that he added usages of his own that became part of standard white "youth" vocabularies a decade after his death. In the play *Lenny* (more than the movie) I was amazed at how inventive his language was. He was talking about "freaks" in what is now the accepted sense at a time when everyone else meant dog-faced boys and bearded ladies.

Beyond that, he was one of the first comic stars to use the nostalgic heroes of popular culture as the butt of his humor. The Long Ranger *shtick* (which can be seen as an animated short, *Thank You, Mask Man*), the Little Orphan Annie routine, and his characterization of movie stereotypes actually constituted a new style of satirical comedy. It's now commonplace, of course, to evoke nostalgic images for whatever trivial reasons. But 15 years ago that process broke through some of the mystification of standard middle-class culture and created a counter to it. Bruce's art was "pop" at its most bitter, and its best.

The last area of ground-breaking Bruce surveyed was sex. Not only did he "talk black" and make cruel jokes about Jackie Kennedy and Little Orphan Annie: he put all that in a sexual context. Burlesque comedians, of course, had been laying on smut for years (and Lenny was literally in that tradition). But they never talked about the First Lady's bosom or rambled on about intercourse with a chicken.

A lot of demolition and excavation work went on before the new foundations of a sexually liberated sensibility began building just a few years ago, and Bruce was there at the start with his own steel ball and dirty spade. The contradictions in his own sexual behavior—as well as within his routines—could not be resolved until the new structures were around for support. Bruce needed the women's and gay movements and the generalized sexual liberation consciousness to help him over his humps and hang-ups: not as therapy, of course, but to provide an alternative to ways of thinking that he had no external basis to question. For instance, his striking preoccupation with homosexuality and what he called "deviation" may or may not have sprung from anxiety or confusion about his own sexuality (Bruce was discharged from the Navy for a homosexual incident which he claimed he deliberately staged). But until there were accepted ways for other people to talk about such matters, and understand them, Bruce had to make his own blind stabs in the dark. It is a sign of his remarkable intuition that so many of them were aimed at the right place.

Bruce had the anti-hero's typical dismal view of himself all along: the anti-egoist's own form of ego-tripping. "All my humor is based on destruction and despair," he said rather grandly. And not so grandly: "I'm a prisoner in a goddamn B movie." He was still, after all, a beatnik; in the absence of promising movements for change, it was every deviate for himself against an unyielding system. I usually recoil from the argument used in apologies for failed political leaders, like John Kennedy, that they would have been somehow "different" or better if they had lived to see the changes that came after their deaths. But it may just be true in Bruce's case. How he would have connected with the quite different world and changed heads just a few years after he died must be speculation, but not entirely the idle kind. Because now we can see him, hear him and read about him against the perspective of a decade he helped to inform.

"The harder you come down on the deviate, the more you need him," Bruce says as he loses his last case in the courts (he was close to imprisonment at the end). He saw then that the Underground and the Establishment were locked in deadly embrace, that the counter-culture meant nothing unless there was a standard culture to oppose. It was a frustrating, desperate insight, which many of us avoided until much later. Bruce lived with the despair well ahead of its time, and he died from it. I wonder whether people who watch the B movie of his life and struggle—his final prison—will catch a glimpse of all that.

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BUILDINGS

(From page 39)

the heart of New York far out into the Atlantic, and contained 300 miles of spectacular shoreline. Scott Fitzgerald, too, had been drawn to Long Island, and was working on the novel that would put it on the cultural map as one of the lasting symbols of the American dream. Moses dreamed of a great network of parks all along the shore, to bring the urban masses (at least those with cars) back to that nature from which the industrial city had cut them off. At first, however, Moses' dream seemed more quixotic than any fantasy of Jay Gatsby's, for Long Island had already been discovered a generation before by the richest of the rich. They had bought up all its most beautiful land, and built themselves manor houses, country clubs, game preserves, palaces that made the Gatsby mansion look small. Where the millionaires had stayed away, land and water were held by isolated and fiercely isolationist villages, full of fear and hatred for the "foreigners" of the city. The villagers joined the Klan in force, burned crosses in the hills, swore to stop at nothing to keep their region pure. The picture looked bleak, the city masses seemed to be decisively fenced out. But Moses prowled up and down and around the island, by car, in boats, on foot, in search of an opening.

Some of his first openings came in surprising ways. He would cut his way through a thicket, climb an ancient stone wall, and suddenly find himself on the shore of a radiant lake, with virgin forest all around him—bought by the City of Brooklyn in the 1850s for a future water supply, but never used and long forgotten. He would be working his way through wild marshes, hidden inlets and coves, when all at once a magnificent beach would open up before him, a strand of the whitest sand he had ever seen, stretching out unbroken to the horizon—it was not even on the maps, for it literally had not existed when the area had last been explored 20 years before, it had been formed only recently by the lashing of the wind and the sea. Moses did his exploring alone ("as a rule Kurtz wandered alone, far in the depths of the forest"), and sometimes he would be lost or stranded, and search parties would have to go out in the night and bring him back.

As Moses stumbled on that great beach, he thrilled with wild surmise. This strand could be the centerpiece of a whole system of beach and forest parks, linked with New York and with each other by a network of landscaped roads that would themselves be parks, bringing the teeming city and the isolated country together at last—"I thought of it all in a moment," he would recall. He discovered that a great deal of the land he had discovered was in public hands. But plenty of it was not, and it was far too expensive for the state to buy, and in any case the villagers and millionaires would never sell. If ever they decided to sell, it would be to private developers—who were beginning to zero in on Long Island—for suburban subdivisions. This would be especially disastrous, for it would shut the public off from the sound and the sea forever. Moses had his work cut out for him. He would have to wrest the shoreline from the robber barons, private developers, and isolationist towns, in the name of "the people" of New York State. Then he would have to build on a vast and unprecedented scale, and at a staggering cost. Finally, he would have to work fast, and in virtual secrecy, because if the state government ever caught on, it would surely stop him before he could start.

[INTO THE LABYRINTH]

But Moses had not spent years in the labyrinth of 20th century government for nothing. In reorganizing the state bureaucracy he had blasted through walls, and turned tortuous trails into straight, clear open roads. But much of what he had learned in the labyrinth he kept to himself, and now he could convert his knowledge into power. Between 1924 and 1929 he engaged in a dazzling array of legal, financial, publicistic, and political manipulations, and at the end of those five years his quixotic dream was a *fait accompli*.

First of all, Moses unearthed a long-forgotten, unrepealed clause in an 1884 state conservation act, that empowered the state to "appropriate" a

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piece of land "by simply walking on it and telling the owner he no longer owned it." He assembled crews and equipment secretly, and then when he felt the time was ripe, he sent them out into the field, citations in hand, to start appropriating. While owners rubbed their eyes in aghast amazement, and their lawyers raced frantically to the statute books—yes, that clause was really there—Moses' men went to work. For he had planned every detail in advance so that, even as opposition was organizing, the work would be going on. He understood that once a job was physically done there was no way that it could be legally or politically undone. "Once you sink that first stake," he would tell a generation of planners and builders, "they'll never make you pull it up." Moses developed this *blitzkrieg* tactic in his earliest projects; it would solidify into a systematic strategy that served him well for 30 years. Simultaneously, he learned to systematically underestimate and conceal his costs, revealing what he had spent only when it was necessary to ask for more. This might sound risky, but Moses understood the politics of inertia: once a project was started, it would have to be finished, regardless of its cost, because to stop it in the middle would be to waste all the money that had been spent and all the work that had been done till then, and no politician would dare do that.

Moses knew, too, how to shift funds and labor power around from one public agency to another, so as to mobilize millions of dollars and thousands of workers that no one had ever given him and no one (except Governor Smith) even knew he had. Finally, he figured out fast how (in Smith's immortal phrase) "to give a bribe and call it a fee": in construction contracts, condemnation proceedings, real estate closings, insurance brokerage fees, inside dope on what land to buy cheap now and sell for a fortune to the state next year. Opposition to his plans would germinate, grow, mobilize, and then suddenly, mysteriously melt away. His work on Long Island gave him a lifelong knack for knowing what offers political men and machines would be unable to refuse.

Moses had never been to law school, but he was a wizard at manipulating the law; similarly, he was no architect or engineer, yet he displayed a talent for design. He assembled some of the best architects and engineers in the country, and drove them harder than anyone had ever driven them, to do work that would be bigger, faster, cheaper and more beautiful than anything they (or anyone else) had ever done—and they loved him for it, and gave him their best. Caro interviewed some of these men 40 years later, and they looked back nostalgically on their work with Moses as the high point of their lives. "It was exciting just being around him," one engineer told Caro. "He made you feel you were part of something big. . . . It was you fighting for the people against those rich estate owners and reactionary legislators. . . . It was almost like a war."

Moses drove his workers as well, made them work through wind and rain, through the night, through snow and ice, living and working on floating barges all winter. But they do not seem to have resented him much, for they knew he drove himself harder than anyone. Unable to leave his job for his family, he brought his family to his job; his wife and daughters integrated themselves into the work, infused it with a sense that they were all one big family working together. Caro creates another great dramatic set-piece here, an unforgettable picture of Moses at his most creative and humanly attractive moment. It takes us back to the last act of Goethe's *Faust,* where, after a lifetime of striving and suffering, the hero feels himself fulfilled at last amidst the turmoil of men and machines building great public works. It was even better than *Faust,* for it included a family warmth and unity that Goethe's solitary hero lacked; a warmth and unity that, according to Caro, the Moses family would rarely, if ever, enjoy again.

Jones Beach, the centerpiece of Moses' plan, and the parkway that led to it, opened in the summer of 1929. "In the history of public works in America," Caro says, "it is probable that never had so much been built so fast." And Moses' early works were at least as striking in quality as in quantity. Visitors were amazed and overwhelmed, and some 325,000 came in the first month, far more than even Moses had dreamt of. The great landscape was a masterpiece, not only of natural beauty, but even more—for so much of it had been swamp and wasteland two years before, or else had not existed at all—of human design. The design was universally praised, not only for a great range of new use-values, but for a hundred lovely expressions of fantasy and play. A huge water tower which could have been a gross eyesore was instead, thanks to Moses' sense of cultural history, an elegant variation on the Venice Campanile; it could be seen for miles, and it became an instant symbol of Long Island's new self-awareness and pride. And Moses' imagination worked at least as well in smaller and more personal things, such as the scattering of little rooms with adjustable tables for changing babies' diapers. The design of Jones Beach managed to be at once monumental and yet, as the *Architectural Forum* said, "scaled down to the size of a good time." This beach is still one of America's finest expressions of the romance of public works. Indeed, it helped to create a

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whole new form of American public space.

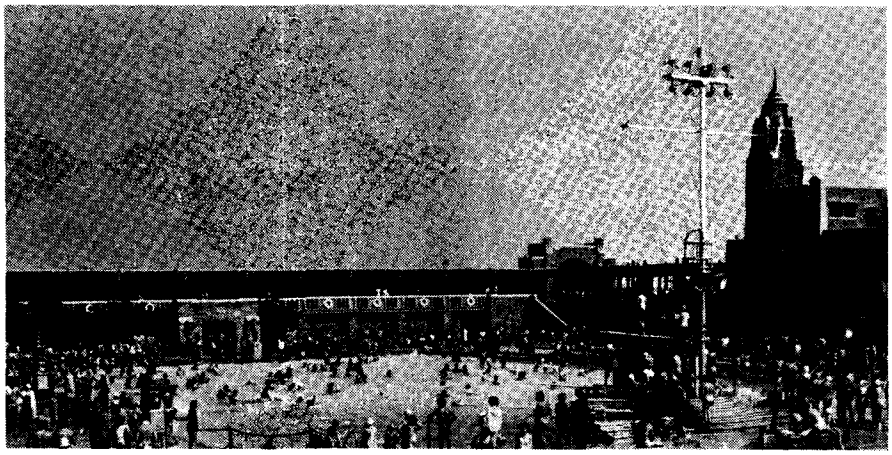
Moses' parkways embodied another spectacular new form of public space, and expressed a romance all their own. These roads, still among the most beautiful in the world, do not (like, California's Coast Highway) cross or adjoin or highlight a beautiful environment: the point about them is that they are *in themselves* a beautiful environment. Even if they adjoined nothing and led nowhere, they still would be, as we said in the Sixties, a trip. Thus Moses, who never learned to drive, inspired what has since become one of the basic (and, alas, costly) American experiences: driving as an end in itself. He became a national hero.

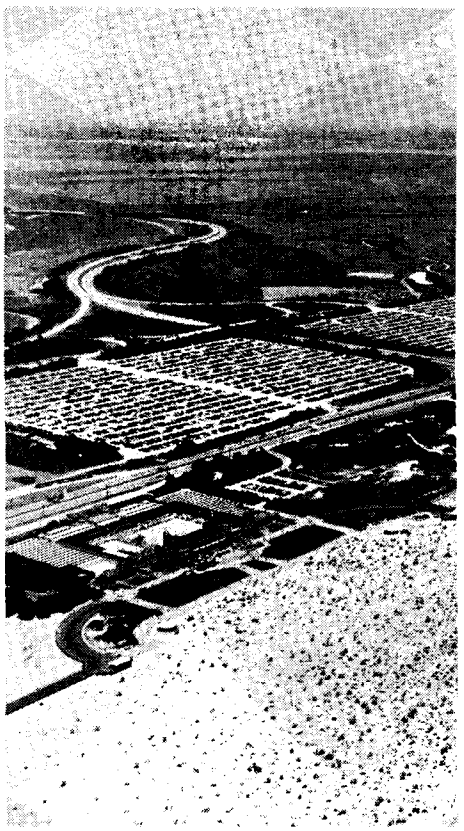
[THE MASTER BUILDER]

Moses opened his career as a master builder just before the Great Crash. As the Depression hit, and cut deeper, and threw millions of people out of work, it became clear to everybody—except for the men in the White House—that the federal government was going to have to act decisively to get the country moving again. When FDR proclaimed the New Deal in 1933, one of its crucial parts was a federal program of public employment and public works on a far more massive scale than America had ever known. For a man who had just demonstrated a genius for public works, it was an ideal moment. Moses expanded the base of his power at once into New York, where he became the city parks commissioner (as well as the state's), and into Washington, where he established close and lasting ties with the energetic and innovative planners of the New Deal bureaucracy.

Moses hired a staff of first-rate planners (mostly from off the unemployment lines), mobilized a labor army—up to 68,000 men, paid with federal money—and went to work on a great crash program that would not only regenerate the city's 1,700 parks (which seem to have been even more rundown then than they are now), but create a huge network of new ones and hundreds of playgrounds, and a couple of zoos. Not only did Moses get the job done, but he got it done in less than a year. Caro paints more thrilling Faustian scenes of heroic construction: Central Park turned into a phantasmagoria of floodlights, earthmovers, jackhammers, sandblasters, reverberating all through the night—the work went on 24 hours, seven days, never stopping till the job was done; work crews, given real work to do at last, not only keeping up with the relentless pressures that Moses and his straw bosses imposed, but actually outpacing the bosses, and taking initiative, and coming up with new ideas, and working ahead of plans—so that the engineers were forced constantly to run back to their desks and redesign their plans, to take account of the progress the workers had made on their own. Here we see the romance of construction at its best: a vision that grips the men who actually do the work.*

Moses understood instinctively how bureaucrats thought and worked and what they wanted. Now that there was a vast, seemingly inexhaustible supply of federal money available for public works, he was first in line. His projects were always organized and planned down to the last detail, ready to start immediately, needing only money to move: there was nothing for Washington to do, except to sign the check, and it inevitably did. Manipulating men (manpower in the tens of thousands), mandates (city, state, and federal) and money (in the hundreds of millions) like a master magician, Moses repeated the "miracle" of Jones Beach on an ever larger scale. The New Deal gave him the power to build a comprehensive system of great, sweeping highways around the periphery of the city. The heart of this system was the Triborough Project, a network of bridges and approaches and parkways that would link Manhattan, the Bronx and Westchester with Queens and Long Island, and so bring the city and the country closer than ever. Moses' projects in this period were incredibly expensive, technically brilliant—Caro





*** This is the sort of vision that animates the great TVA and FSA documentaries of the Thirties, and the Soviet "tractor films" of the same era. (It may be most readily available to us through Woody Guthrie's many "dam songs" and celebrations of the man "born with a jackhammer in his hand.") It suggests that thinkers like Carlyle and Durkheim, whom the Left has always disparaged, were right to insist that workers could find meaning and fulfillment even in jobs that were physically gruelling and mentally empty—jobs that would be, by many people's standards, utterly "alienated"—if they had a vision of the meaning of the work as a whole, and if they could believe in its real value to the human community. Moses was one of the first to show that it could happen even in America.**

Top Left: Swimming Pool, Jones Beach
Bottom: Jones Beach, Long Island
Top Right: Water Tower, Jones Beach

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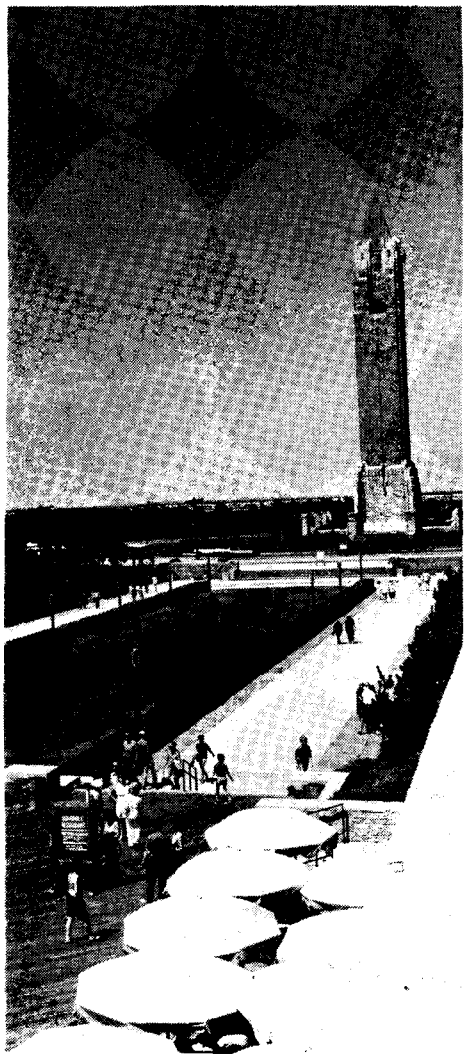

gives us an unforgettable picture of one bridge being erected overnight in the Bronx, and of people discovering it, to their amazement, the next morning—and beautifully designed to the minutest details.

Through these projects, Moses took a tremendous and teeming city that had developed spontaneously and planlessly from a multitude of isolated villages and separate and insular neighborhoods and dead-end streets—took it all, as Caro says, and "tied that city together." It is one of those weird ironies of history that the "Lordly Hudson" Paul Goodman celebrated in his beautiful poem owed much of its lordliness to Moses, a man who embodied so much of what Goodman fought against all his life. Nevertheless, it was Moses who turned the uptown Hudson riverfront from a wasteland of shacks and garbage dumps into one of the most beautiful urban landscapes in the world.* You cross the George Washington Bridge, and dip down and around and slide into the gentle curve of the West Side Highway, and the lights and towers of Manhattan flash and glow before you like a vision, rising above the lush greenness of Riverside Park, and even the most embittered ex- and anti-New Yorker will be touched; you know you have come home again, and you can thank Robert Moses for that.

Moses was far from a New Dealer, yet most of his most beautiful and beloved projects belong to the age of the New Deal. The years from FDR's first inaugural to Pearl Harbor revealed the welfare state at its freshest and most imaginative, acting and building on a colossal scale, yet with remarkable sensitivity to human lives and needs. Moses, despite himself, was caught up in the vision and energy of the New Deal, and it brought out the best in him.

[THE DIALECTICS OF DARKNESS]

Nevertheless, as Caro documents, Moses' brilliant spirit always had its darker side. At first the darkness was something that only the people who were closest to him could see. Here is the testimony of Frances Perkins, America's first Secretary of Labor under FDR, who worked closely with Moses during the Al Smith era, and who admired him immensely all her life. She recalls the people's heartfelt love for Moses in the years of his first great public works. However, she says, "he doesn't love the people" for whom he worked so well:

> *It used to shock me because he was doing all these things for the welfare of the people. . . . He'd denounce the common people terribly. To him they were lousy, dirty people, throwing bottles all over Jones Beach. 'I'll get them! I'll teach them!' . . . He loves the public, but not as people. The public is just* the *public. It's a great amorphous mass to him; it needs to be bathed, it needs to be aired, it needs recreation, but not for personal reasons—just to make it a better public.*

"I'll get them! I'll teach them!" Moses' expletives echo the great *cri de coeur* of that archetypal hero of modern "public service," Joseph Conrad's Mr. Kurtz. Conrad's narrator reads Kurtz's manifesto for social imperialism, and marvels at the author's intellectual power and visionary gleam, when he finds himself brought up short by a marginal note that Kurtz has scrawled in an unsteady hand at the foot of the last page: "It was very simple, and at the end of that moving appeal to every idealistic sentiment it blazed at you, luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightning in a serene sky: 'Exterminate all the brutes!' . . ."

Heart of Darkness helps us define the tragic contradiction that runs through the heart of Robert Moses' life and work: the contradiction between his love of "the public" and the hate he felt for actual people. The New Deal gave him immense political and economic power, yet managed to direct some of that power in the service of his—and, for the time being, America's—most radiant and generous impulses. But the spirit of the New Deal did not last long. Within less than a decade it would be eclipsed by the darker visions of the War and the Cold War years. In this new era the govern-

*** Younger New Yorkers imagine that the area was all romantic natural loveliness until Moses got there. In fact, as Caro shows, most of the romance of that riverfront was created by Moses himself.**

Photos by Long Island State Park Commission

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mental powers that the New Deal had so beneficently enlarged would operate in far more menacing ways. In this era, too, Moses' own inner darkness—"I'll get them! I'll teach them!"—could come to the surface and, thanks to his immense new powers, spread its blight brutally over the surfaces and into the depths of millions of people's lives.

Moses' power to build and destroy not only expanded in quantity, but took on a radically new quality, when he plugged his activities into a device known as a public authority. This English institution had been grafted onto U.S. public works early in the 20th century, and used in a scattered and fragmentary way in various projects. An authority would float bonds to build a particular project, a bridge or a tunnel or a highway; when its project was completed, it would charge tolls or fees for use, until the bonds were paid off; at that point it was to go out of existence and turn the public work over to the state. It occurred to Moses, however, that there was no reason for an authority to limit itself in time or space; so long as money was coming in, e.g., from tolls on the Triborough Bridge, an authority could exchange its old bonds for new ones, to raise more money, to build more works; so long as the money—all of it tax exempt—kept coming in, the banks that held the bonds would be only too glad to underwrite new ones, and the authority could go on building forever. Moreover, it would no longer be necessary to go to city, state, or federal governments, or to the people, for money to build. In fact, Moses discovered, the various elected governments did not even have the legal right to inspect an authority's books. So long as the tolls kept rolling in, there was nothing and no one that could stand in its way.

What kept the money rolling in, far faster than even Moses dared to hope, was a technological and social change that Moses only partly understood: the automobile was re-creating all America in its image. Moses' first great wave of public works, his beautiful parks and parkways just outside the city, had helped this recreation along: now that the countryside was perfectly accessible by car, it was ripe for mass suburbanization, a commuter's dream. When Moses built his second wave of public works in the Thirties, he expected that the new bridges, tunnels, and parkways would relieve the congestion of traffic on which the city was already beginning to choke. Instead, the new works generated far more traffic—more congestion, pressure, fumes, noise—than ever before. It was at this point, when America's cities needed a new imaginative leap, that Moses' vision began to reveal undertones of a nightmare. If there were more cars on the roads and bridges and in the tunnels, the only solution he could see was to build more of the same; of course, the more arteries he built, the more traffic appeared to fill them; and so the problem spiraled on viciously for another 20 years.

Caro is particularly angry at Moses for this. Perhaps it is unfair to blame him for it all: until the end of the Fifties there were few (Louis Mumford is a notable exception) grappling with the problem any better than he. Yet Moses and his public authorities had a vested interest in lack of vision. The more they built, the more traffic they generated; the more traffic they could generate, the more money they would have to build.* Between the late Thirties and the late Fifties, Moses created or took over a dozen of these public authorities, and consolidated and integrated them into an immensely powerful machine, a machine with endless wheels within wheels, turning its cogs into millionaires, drawing thousands of businessmen and politicians into its widening gyre. As Moses' creative powers sputtered and slowed down, the machine he had created picked up a blind, irresistible momentum of its own.

[THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE]

With these changes, Moses came to embody some of the deepest ironies of 20th-century American life. According to the *Communist Manifesto,* one of the crucial forces that made bourgeois society go, and that generated some of its most brilliant achievements, was its innate drive to "establish connections everywhere." However, few bourgeoisie had the imagination to think of this: the vast majority simply pursued their private profits and went wherever that pursuit might lead them, without worrying about the larger historical meanings of what they did. What made Robert Moses seem so special was the largeness of his visions and ideas, his intellectual and organizational power to grasp the whole: he could seize and direct the hidden historical forces that were shaping and moving the world's most vital bourgeois society; he could help the American city to utilize these explosive forces to put itself together. "It has long been a cherished ambition of mine," he wrote in 1941, "to weave together the loose strands and frayed edges of the New York metropolitan arterial tapestry." But there were wider and deeper connections that not even Moses could see. Marx had compared the bourgeoisie to "a sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the underworld that he has called up by his spells." The magnificent arteries with which Moses had hoped to weave the city together had coalesced into a hangman's knot around the city's neck: squalor and suffocation at the center, space and freedom available only for those who could escape into the subdivided suburbs on the periphery. The heroic construction that had succeeded at first in bringing the city and the country together was now, after a generation of growth, succeeding at last in destroying them both.

This was the Moses of the Forties and Fifties, the man who built so much and devastated so many people's lives. He was at the height of his power, controlling a dozen public authorities, manipulating billions of dollars in federal funds, and using the money to bribe or break everyone in his way. His blitz could strike anywhere and no politician dared to protest, for Moses' authorities had given so much to so many that there was more than enough in his secret files to destroy them all. "I would never let Moses do anything for me in any way," Mayor Wagner warned a protégé. When Caro, in an interview with Moses, asked how he had induced an admired leader of the opposition to the Cross-Bronx road to betray his people at the last minute, Moses answered in the best gangster tradition: "After he was hit over the head with

*** It should come as no surprise that Moses fought unrelentingly—and successfully—against the diversion of public money to the alternative vision of mass public transit.**

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an ax." But he rarely had to hit: public figures generally knew enough to shut up.

There was much less of the beauty and sensitivity of design that distinguished his early works. Most of what he built now was built in a brutal style, designed to overawe and overwhelm: monoliths of steel and concrete, devoid of nuance or play, sealed off from streets and people by great moats of stark empty space, stamped on the landscape with a ferocious contempt for all natural and human life. He seemed scornfully indifferent to the human quality of what he did: sheer quantity was all that drove him now—dollars spent, tons of cement, moving vehicles. "There's very little hardship in the thing," Moses had said when the Cross-Bronx Expressway was done. "More people in the way, that's all."

As the Fifties dragged on, Moses' system kept up its relentless growth, but those of us who watched him began to sense something wrong with the picture: he was spreading himself too thin for his own good. The empire had become so vast, and there was simply too much business for him to take care of by himself. In the newest outposts—Urban Renewal, for one—the brilliant engineers and technocrats Moses had once attracted were staying away, and power was being grasped by hacks and crooks. These new men were not merely corrupt, but grossly stupid, blatantly inept. He must have been ashamed—not ashamed that thousands of people were being thrown out of their homes, that old and poor people were being terrorized in buildings without heat or light or water, that dozens of solid neighborhoods were being destroyed, but ashamed that, for all that, these new projects weren't even getting built. Meanwhile, however, as Moses wove his great web of public works more and more intricately through millions of people's lives, more and more people were coming to feel that they were being strangled and eaten up, that they had to cut the web and break out. For a whole generation of New Yorkers, Moses was becoming the embodiment of all the horrible social forces that had to be stopped. And even those who had loved him most—as the *New York Times* had loved him, selflessly and even (as Caro shows) self-abasingly, for 30 years—were coming to see that he would have to go.

Caro, by putting Moses' most monstrous works in the larger context of a long and heroic career, shows just how tragic Moses' life story really is. Here was a man who had everything, whose vision and imagination and creative energy drove him to serve the people magnificently—indeed, to serve us far better than many who loved us far more—and yet, whose very genius and creative powers turned him into a danger and a nightmare to the people for whom he had done so much. Caro reveals in Moses' life a grandeur and sadness that is as old as culture itself.* At the same time, some of the ironies and contradictions of Moses' tragedy have a specific resonance in our collective life today. In the first 20 years of his work as a master builder, he did more than any man in American history to nourish the romance of construction and bring it to a climax; in his next 20 years of building, he would do more than any man to poison that romance and tear it down.

How was Moses finally stopped? Caro gives good accounts of some of the prologues in the late Fifties and some of the epilogues in the mid-Sixties, when Rockefeller and Lindsay finally wrested public works completely out of his hands. Strangely, however, Caro entirely omits the episode that seems to me most climactic and decisive: the tremendous battle over the Lower Manhattan Expressway. This was a project that Moses had dreamt of for 30 years. It would have run clear across Manhattan, from the East River to the Hudson. The cost was outrageous, even by Moses' own estimates, but the Federal Government was willing to pick up 90 percent of the check, and so, at one stroke, bring billions of dollars' worth of money, contracts, and jobs into New York—it seemed like an offer the city could not refuse. The highway would have cut through the heart of the West Village, Soho, Chinatown, and the Lower East Side. To Moses, and to federal and state officials at the time, there was nothing worth saving in these neighborhoods: they were "slums," filled with rotten tenements and teeming with wretched refuse.

Some protests were expected, but there had always been protests, and none of them had meant a thing. Moreover, the people in the way of this highway belonged to widely disparate ethnic, class, age, and subcultural groups, tribes that were perpetually at each other's throats, and could always be counted on to cancel each other out. However, to everybody's surprise—and the groups themselves were most surprised of all—the Chinese, Italians, Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Jews, John Birchers, aristocratic WASP liberals (like Lindsay), Greenwich Village bohemians and middle-class Reform Democrats were suddenly working together, turning public hearings from charades into real political confrontations, stopping traffic in the streets. And there was another crucial difference: Moses had always denounced his opponents as

*** This sort of tragedy is the basis of the oldest story in the world, the Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh. King Gilgamesh destroys monsters who menace his people, but then turns on the people themselves, and turns himself from their hero into their terror. He seeks immortality, fails to find it, and dies unfulfilled. But he does attain a kind of immortality on earth by building a monumental Great Wall.**

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mere selfish opportunists, promoting their particular private interests against the welfare of "the Public"; this coalition was appealing to a general public on behalf of a coherent and striking public philosophy. Their basic idea, expounded most cogently and convincingly by Jane Jacobs, was that the street and the neighborhood were the very heart of city life, and that the destruction of streets and neighborhoods menaced the energy and integrity of the city as a whole. The new combination was too much even for Moses: in 1966, after a decade of desperate fighting, his plan was wiped off the map.

Moses never really knew what hit him; but the road that he had hacked through the metropolis with a meat ax for 30 years had been decisively blocked, and he could never be certain of his mission or his momentum again. The next year, when Rockefeller moved to drive him from his last and greatest fortress, the Triborough Authority, he seemed mysteriously to lose his will to power—to everyone's surprise, he let himself be blown away.

Caro captures the pathos of Moses' life in the shadows: sick at heart when his great works are abused, or forgotten, or ascribed to other men, or (like his beautiful West Side landscape) to Mother Nature; but still all there, even at the age of 87, still full of wit and energy and tremendous schemes, refusing, like Mr. Kurtz, to be counted out ("I'll carry out my ideas yet . . . I'll show you what can be done . . . I will return. I . . .") Driven restlessly up and down his Long Island beachfront in his black limousine, dreaming of a glorious 160-mile Ocean Drive to whip the waves, this old man has an undeniably tragic grandeur. What he does not have, alas, is the tragic self-awareness that is supposed to go with this grandeur. In his reply to *The Power Broker,* he asks us all: Am I not, after all, the man who blotted out the Valley of Ashes, and gave mankind beauty in its place? It is true, and we all owe him homage for it. And yet, he did not really wipe out the ashes, he only moved them to another site; he created new forms of waste and blight and death to supplant the old forms that he destroyed. For the ashes are part of us, part of the inner darkness that stays with us, no matter how straight and smooth we make our freeways, no matter how fast we drive—or are driven—no matter how far out on Long Island we go.

[NEIGHBORHOODS AND HISTORY]

We leave Moses, then, at the edge of the sea, waiting in vain for the call to come back and make the earth move again. But where does all this leave Caro himself? This question has a special urgency for us because Caro's ideas on the city, on planning, on government, on community, are identical with the ones that animated the New Left throughout the Sixties. Unfortunately, Caro tends to treat these ideas as simple eternal truths. Had he examined the historical context in which his (and our) ideas came into being—in communal struggles like the fight against the Lower Manhattan Expressway—he would have seen that the truth value of the ideas we share is a lot more complex and problematical than he seems to think.

Caro's lack of perspective on his own perspective leads him into tragic anachronisms. His account of the Cross-Bronx Expressway begins with a beautiful evocation of a world we have lost, the shoddy but vibrant world of a second-generation Jewish neighborhood a generation ago. This lovely vision sets us up for shock and horror when we see that world destroyed. The devastation of that world really was horrible, yet there is something wrong with Caro's picture: his appreciation of the old neighborhood is based on values that are new; they are the values of 1970, and they were nowhere in the picture in 1950, when the neighborhood was still in flower. The ironic fact is that the neighborhood people themselves lacked these ideas when they were most in need of them; they did not even have the vocabulary to defend their neighborhoods because, until the Sixties, that vocabulary simply did not exist.

Hence the people of the Bronx were torn between our hearts, which were shattered to see our neighborhood go, and our minds, in which the neighborhood had no grounds to stand on. It was not only that, as children of the New Deal, we all believed in the ultimate beneficence of big govern-

Top: Triborough Bridge, N.Y.C.

Center: West Side Highway, N.Y.C.

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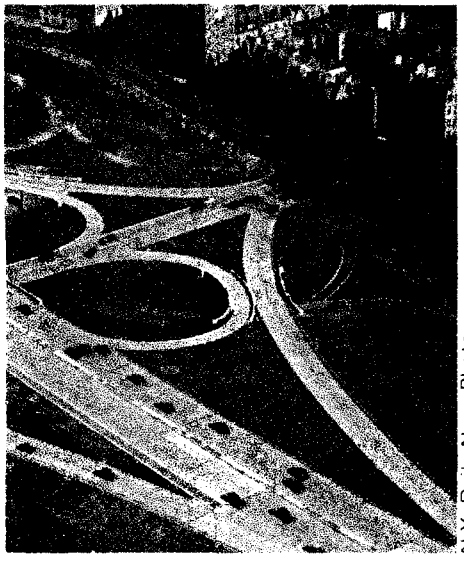

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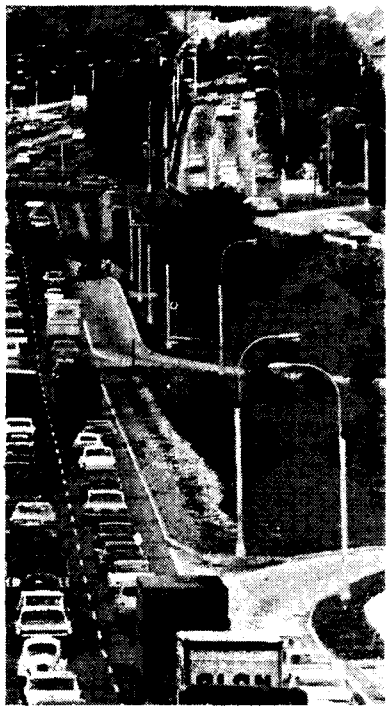

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ment, centralized planning, large-scale public works. Beyond that, all of us were possessed by the great American dream of mobility: to live the good life meant physically to move out, socially to move up, this was the only way to go. Not even the radicals of those days questioned the dream: their only complaint was that it wasn't being fulfilled, that people weren't able to move fast or freely or equally enough. But when you see life this way, no neighborhood can be anything more than a stage along life's way, a launching pad for greater things. Even Molly Goldberg, earth goddess of the Jewish Bronx, had to move. That was just the way things were: change, progress, "improvement," the law of life (life in America, at least, for why had our parents or grandparents come to to America at all, if not to move?). This was and still is, as Leonard Michaels puts it perfectly, "the mentality of neighborhood types who, quick as possible, got the hell out of their neighborhoods." This inner contradiction has generated much of the energy that has torn so many of our neighborhoods and our people to pieces, and made our economy and our culture and our country great.

The neighborhood Caro focuses on made no protest against Moses' road as a whole: they argued simply that there was no reason to build it through their neighborhood; an alternate route would leave their homes and lives intact. From Caro's description, their claim sounds plausible—though, of course, that made no difference to Moses, who crushed them like insects. But what if you had no alternate route? For most Americans in the '50s, there was simply no way to argue coherently that, for human reasons, a road should not be built *at all.* All you could do in protest was to rage and weep. The people of the Bronx had no way to resist the wheels that drove the American dream—a dream that was driving us ourselves—even though we knew the wheels would break us. At the same time, the tremendous energy of the dream, the frenzied economic and psychic pressure to move up and out, was breaking down hundreds of American neighborhoods like the Bronx, even where there was no Moses to lead the exodus and no Expressways to do the work fast.

[STOPPING THE MACHINE]

It was only in the Sixties, with the advent of the New Left and the "counter-culture," that America found ways to ask seriously: Mobility for what? These middle-class children of the dream forced our whole culture to ask: where are we rushing, and for what human end, and at what human cost? Mario Savio of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement spoke for far more Americans than he realized when, in the winter of 1964, he said: "There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part . . . and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers and upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop . . . ."

Stop the Machine! This idea was expressed most urgently by the New Left, which spent much of the Sixties trying to stop the Vietnam War and all the machines that propelled it. It is striking that two of the most stirring actions of the Sixties involved sitting down on construction sites and stopping the works: a gymnasium in a park at Columbia, a parking lot on a "free space" at People's Park. But the idea reached far beyond the range of the New Left and inflamed millions of Americans who saw themselves as anything but Left or New. Suddenly, for the first time anyone could remember, America's master builders were on the defensive, publicly despised for their "public works"; there was a vast wave of free-floating popular sympathy for "the people" in the way, and this sympathy could often be utilized to block the way.* All through the Sixties, all over America, by force or by vote, great machines and great works were stopped. In the New York version of this drama, Robert Moses played a crucial role: he was sitting on top of the world we were trying to stop, lashing his men and machines to move faster as resistance grew. Thesis and Antithesis, he and we needed each other.

*** Note a crucial change in radical iconography: the Arm-and-Hammer and the Hammer-and-Sickle were the most vivid and powerful symbols of the Old Left; the New Left proclaimed its presence most dramatically with a Clenched Fist. All these are symbols of strength, determination, and potential violence; but the icons of the Old Left also express the will and power to *build*.**

Bottom: Congestion on the Long Island Expressway, N.Y.C.

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There was good news and there was bad news in all this. The good news is that we stopped some really dreadful things: Vietnamese as well as American neighborhoods could be grateful. The bad news is that, in the great combat between Heroic Construction and Heroic Resistance, the dialectic has fallen flat: instead of generating some sort of higher synthesis, the two impulses and antagonists seem to have canceled each other out, or eaten each other up. A decade after Mario Savio urged his fellow Americans to Stop the Machine, a great many of America's machines are stunningly silent—far more than the New Left would ever have dreamed—and (except for the rich, whom we always have with us) virtually nothing is being built at all; but the brave people who threw themselves on those wheels for a decade are now even more turned off than the machines. The ponderous Roman weight of that abstract entity, "the public," in whose supposed interest Moses built all his public works, has crumbled and disappeared; but the native American energy and vitality of "the people," the force that blocked the works, is equally remote today, equally gone with the wind.

[THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE]

What the Seventies have given us in place of both can be summed up in a strange slogan—THINK SMALL. In other words, center yourself in the life immediately around you—your block, your neighborhood, your ethnic group, your family and friends, your loved ones, your inner life, your most intimate ways of feeling and being, and let history take care of itself for awhile. I don't want to sound smug about "thinking small," because I know it's helped me and plenty of other Americans not only to survive, but to thrive, in a dismal time. Moreover, it has inspired people to weave together and brighten up much of the street and neighborhood fabric of our cities, a fabric that had been terribly worn and torn by a generation of "thinking big."

Still, I worry about what all this shrinking thinking is doing to America as a whole. I see our society disintegrating into a multitude of guarded enclaves and embattled camps—ethnic, class, regional, religious, racial, sexual, —not only separated but aggressively separatist, tribal or sectarian in our sense of life, celebrating bigotry as integrity, fierce in our fears of everything and everyone "outside"; refusing not only to melt, but even to live together in the same pot, at worst burning books and schools, and people, to keep our world pure; at best peaceably but avidly waiting for the rest of the world to go to hell. After a quarter century of manic mobility, Americans are digging themselves in for a long winter of depressive rigidity: they are freezing their souls, cloning themselves with a kind of spiritual cryogenics, as the Depression sets in. If this is the way history takes care of itself when people Think Small, it's enough to make me feel nostalgia for people with the spirit and the guts to Think Big.

So we're back with Moses again: stranded together, in a kind of spiritual Casablanca, strange bedfellows in Rick's Bar, trying to fathom each other, and ourselves, and our strange intimate enmity, as time goes by. Both he and we are entangled and intertwined in some of the deepest contradictions in bourgeois society and modern life.

Robert Moses has always claimed to be conservative, professed his faith in "law and order"—and yet, in his greatest works and acts, he has proved himself to be one of the most extravagant nihilists in modern history. There is nothing this man would not pull up by the roots, no one he would not destroy, if necessary, nothing he would not build if he had the chance. Nothing is sacred to him—he is not even interested in making money!—except the demonic compulsion to act and to organize and to build. He fulfilled Jerry Rubin's maxim "Do It!" far beyond Rubin's wildest dreams. Moses could build magnificently: his problem was that he did not know when or where to stop—and so finally he had to be stopped. Indeed, he didn't even know where to start: he seized the openings at hand and built whatever, wherever, whenever he could; he never even began to think about what kinds of buildings people might actually *need*, or about what kinds of buildings people might not need at all.

We of the old New Left had problems radically different from these. We were acutely sensitive to human feelings and needs—indeed, the New Left might be called, to its credit, a politics of sensitivity—and we understood how American institutions trampled on these feelings and needs. But although we knew what things needed to be stopped, and how to stop them, we had no idea how to *start* things. We had very little capacity to even imagine, let alone plan and organize and build, structures that could put our sensitivity into effect. Hence, for all our dreams of heroic activism, there was very little we could do, constructively, concretely, to change the world. It is true enough that we never really had much power to show what we could do; but one reason may have been that we never developed any clear ideas of what we were prepared to do. Between our visions and our plans fell a very large shadow.

Here is where our great enemy may be able to help us. In exploring Moses' works, unraveling his achievements, disentangling the beauty from the horror, we may be able to develop some sense of how to actually build things, how to put the visions and the plans and the materials and the people together. This kind of lesson may turn out to be "relevant" before long. The deeper our economy recedes into Depression, the more public pressure there is going to be for massive programs of public works to get us out. Whether America's next wave of construction devastates and degrades "the people," or helps people feel and live more like human beings, may depend on us, on whether we can bring the romance of building to life again. We had better not count on a new hero of construction to put it together for us: *The Power Broker* shows what happened last time we did that. Unhappy the land that needs a hero. But we may not need a hero later on if we can confront our real needs right now. If we remember that buildings are judgment, we may be able to win a better judgment for ourselves next time around.

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MIDEAST
(From page 25)

what will happen in U.S. cities under conditions of nuclear devastation? How, and from where, will city dwellers get *their* drinking water? By driving to the nearest river in a car with an empty gas tank—empty because the gasoline pumps are themselves electrically powered?

Virtually all transport would cease in the U.S., and all food processing to which electricity and water are requisite. There would be no way for the city dwellers to survive. (Death by thirst alone would occur before one week had ended.) And if they flocked into the countryside to steal food and water, they would be invading rifle country populated by able marksmen and skilled hunters.

This involves us in more complicated paradoxes. The U.S., in the ultimate sense, is more vulnerable to nuclear attack than the Soviet Union. But will this provoke a pre-emptive strike against Russia? Or will Russia assume that such a pre-emptive strike is inevitable in the Pentagon's thinking and, therefore, will Russia itself make both a pre-emptive strike and a nuclear attack upon the U.S. power grid?

Nobody, not even in the Kremlin or the White House, can answer these questions. One may reasonably conclude that the U.S. will attempt to avoid a nuclear war with Russia. But one may not conclude that such attempts will be reasonable in nature. Utterances and actions by the United States indicate a *readiness* to provoke a world war, even if they do not demonstrate conclusively a fixed intention.

[PURSUIT OF A NEW ORDER]

In simple words, the United States will pursue a peace policy if—and only if—Europe and Arabia finance not only today's U.S. international bankruptcy but, in addition, a huge expansion of U.S. armaments. If the U.S. and Israel succeed in conquering Arabia, and avoid a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union, a new set of compulsory alliances will be created—and a vast new market for U.S.-made weapons. Their purchase would be no voluntary act for Arabia or Africa. For the whole of the African-Arabian continent would be not only under U.S.-Israeli control, but integrated with the strategic position of U.S. military forces *vis à vis* both Europe and Russia, and the Indian subcontinent. That arming of the region would occur, including the building of military-industrial production mechanisms, goes without saying. The trick is as old as the Roman Empire. Vast new markets for U.S. arms and industrial products would come into being—paid for by Europe and Japan in exchange for the oil resources which, it appears planned, are to be stolen from Arabia.

The effect would be an extraordinary industrial boom in the U.S., which explains why certain leaders of organized labor are licking their chops at the prospect. U.S. victory would erase the U.S. depression and—by exploitation of Arabia, Africa, Europe, India, and Japan—would satisfy the greediest of the growthniks of this country, labor and capital alike.

There is certainly no present intention on the part of the Ford Administration to exchange productive industrial goods for the petroleum energy of Arabia. Nor does the Administration intend that France, Germany, Italy, England, or Japan engage in such direct exchange of industrial capacity for industrial energy. It is exactly this that Henry Kissinger was warning against when he declared that the price of Arabian and Iranian oil was no *casus belli* but that utilization of Mid-East oil for political purposes could well lead to war by the United States.

This statement needs to be examined carefully and placed in the context of other events.

What are the political purposes to which Arabia could put its oil reserves? The answer lies in the nature of international politics itself. And world politics in our generation can be summed up in one word: money. Not real money, be it emphasized, but the paper stuff, uncontrolled as to amount, and required to be accepted at home and abroad as though it represented real value. Capitalist governments live on the proliferation and multiplication of money issued by fiat, whose possible quantity is limited only by the availability of appropriate paper, the functional life of engraved plates with which to print the stuff, and the speed and number of the printing presses.

Money and goods have lost their essential connection—but goods, as of the moment, can be purchased only with money. The theory behind this is that money is only an accounting convenience, that in the exchange of labor for the means of subsistence, or in the financing of capital equipment, money serves only an intermediary role, and this a brief one because accounting systems quickly balance out money flows, establishing countervailing debts and credits by pure bookkeeping.

At base, this means that money is now only an artifice and is in no way a store of value nor even the representation of a store of value. And this the Arabs have rejected.

America views the Arabs (all of OPEC, for that matter) as primitive, uneducated, essentially ignorant people, at least one hundred years behind the times. They audaciously demand that if they sell petroleum for money, this money must represent a dependable store of value, exchangeable at stable prices into any kind of merchandise the world produces. Even worse, they demand that the world produce the kinds of products they want to buy in exchange for their petroleum.

This is political purpose of the highest order, and dangerous in the extreme. It denies that fiat money is equal to, and of a higher order than, money which possesses innate value or represents a reserve supply of positive, useful physical value. In brief, the insistence of OPEC that it receive real goods and services in exchange for its fuels—overpriced or not, and they *are* overpriced—is a direct threat to the counterfeit-money-based bourgeois national system of our age. And if the "backward" Arabs compel Europe to return to a national money system representative of the real relative values of goods produced in and exchanged among nations, this would be political assault upon European and Japanese civilization—a cause for war.

But continental Europe and Japan are cooperating with the Mid-East OPEC nations to bring this rational system into existence. Plans, long known to be in negotiation, have now

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been announced officially for the building of an oil pipeline up through Yugoslavia and Poland, to interconnect with Russia's pipeline system to Europe, and to extend westward into Europe's industrial systems, to guarantee them an uninterrupted supply of petroleum fuel.

Details have not been revealed as to the extent to which the Arab producers will pay their share of the construction cost in oil; it is believed to constitute a significant proportion of their contribution to the project, i.e., pure barter. And on a world scale, barter is a form of treason against today's capitalist ethic that one must always pay back less than one purchases, i.e., that inflation must increasingly impoverish the producers of critical materials so that the consuming nations may continue to prosper without really working hard or forgoing luxuries which their people now regard as necessities.

That the U.S. regards such an attitude as "political" (in the Kissinger meaning of the term) is demonstrated by the vigorous initial opposition of the U.S. to renewal of the "oil facility" within the IMF, by which the IMF borrowed from the newly rich oil countries to lend at very low interest rates to desperately poor countries with no domestic oil reserves. Europe, however, proved adamant in insisting that the OPEC countries be permitted to continue in this role within the IMF. The resulting "oil facility" totalled $6 billion. In fact, the nine EEC countries supplemented the oil facility funds with a $4 billion, five-year development assistance appropriation.

What the U.S. had feared was that continuation of the "oil facility" might serve as an opening wedge by which solvent countries (principally oil producers today) would gradually assume equality with the U.S. in decisions within the IMF and perhaps eventual domination of the IMF.

In brief, what the flow of oil money to the OPEC countries threatens is continued U.S. dominance over the world monetary order, compelling the U.S. to retreat from all positions of suzerainty anywhere outside its borders. This, of course, is politics in the highest sense of the term—higher by far than anything which Kissinger has conceded that the word implies.

It is appropriate, here, for some comparisons to be drawn. $6 billion is a lot of money—or is it? In 1974, OPEC countries disbursed about $2.6 billion in aid, loans and gifts to oil-poor Arab and other nations, and committed themselves, out of that one year's oil reserves alone, to a further $7 billion of such aid over and above the IMF "oil facility." And it is ironic that the $9.6 billion, largely of Saudi Arabian origin, is almost identical to the seven-years total oil revenues of Saudi Arabia from oil immediately prior to nationalizing petroleum.

Now look at it from the American viewpoint. To the best of my present ability to measure (until later and more refined data are available), U.S. per capita consumption of refined petroleum in 1973 was about 22.4 barrels, close to 941 gallons per person per year. (This excludes all commercial aviation fuel, all military jet fuel as far as I can eliminate it, all asphalt.) In 1970, the per capita consumption of refined oil was about 19.81 barrels or 832 gallons per capita per year. In three years, per capita consumption of refined oil had increased 13 percent for apparently civilian purposes.

There is no point in extrapolating this increase (nor the 107 percent per capita increase since the end of World War II) because the oil is simply not going to be made available except in exchange for goods and products which the U.S. has no intention of yielding up in exchange for oil.

Other countries are so willing. For example, under Japanese engineering supervision, a highway is planned along the entire Mediterranean coast, to Iraq and the Petro-Gulf (I think it injurious to name it either the Arabian Gulf or Persian Gulf). Lateral roads will later be extended downwards to Ethiopia, the Sudan, etc., linking together all North African, Arab, and Persian peoples in a common transport system upon which will be based a new industrial, advanced civilization reproducing, in modern guise, astonishing accomplishments of the ancient Phoenicians—Semitic ancestors of both Arabs and Jews.

What I had to say in my "New International Power Game" (RAMPARTS, Nov., 1973) bears repeating:

"In fact, the Near East and Libya are accumulating cash faster than they can presently use it. Arabia and North Africa, it seems, are now ready for an extraordinary lunge forward towards industrialization. In terms of financial resources, they have the opportunity of industrializing at a rate faster even than Japan. In terms of physical resources, Africa north of Lake Chad, together with Zambia, are known to have untapped deposits of coal, phosphates, zinc, lead, manganese, tin, antimony, silver, molybdenum, copper, and perhaps gold in paying quantities. The Sudan has vast deposits of hematite sands possibly capable of direct reduction for use in steel production on the site. The Congo, of course, is an established source of uranium. Obviously, these countries must undertake major social and other changes—including trans-national irrigation, road-building, education, drilling for geologic water and tree-planting to hold back the desert. The Arabian oil-producers in Libya and the Near East have at present the cash resources to begin such development, but they cannot be certain of having enough to see it through unless they assume control of foreign-owned oil companies. . . .

"Meanwhile, as Europe itself continues economic expansion, it has growing needs for petroleum products. Thus Arabia and the Common Market develop common interests alongside the growth of Arabian savings in European banks. And from here to integration of economies is a very short step.

"So it is with the iron, coal, copper and other minerals of North Africa proper. If Arabia moves toward association with the European Community, those parts of Africa not already enjoying the benefits of Common Market arrangements will almost automatically follow suit. This is the only power game in the world today in which all players can win—so long as the chips are neither dollars nor sterling."

[THE LAST RESORT]

This the U.S. intends to prevent, as it intends to prevent abandonment of the fiat money system. Instead, supposing the predicted May invasion of Arabia to occur and to prove successful, the U.S. by 1980

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would be in command of perhaps $100 billion per year of net petrodollars, making this country absolute master not only of the world monetary system but of Europe and Japan, now almost totally dependent upon Arabian oil.

This is the stake the U.S. will go to war to win. Not the re-creation of an ancient civilization modernized to the nth degree, but cold, hard cash. For the federal budget deficit this year will be at least $50 billion (forget President Ford's talk of $30 billion), the unemployment rate may reach 10+ percent, major companies will fail, and the banks can rescue almost none of them.

If the Federal Reserve "eases money" much more, the dollar will fall steeply in foreign exchange markets and may require rescuing as did Italy's lira. But who can rescue the dollar? And what price will they exact, especially a political price?

The answer is self-evident. Only the OPEC countries could rescue the dollar—on their political terms. This is the one thing this country (at least, its administration) cannot, for pride, permit at any price.

The probability of U.S. invasion of Arabia is thus very high. One unasked, and unanswered, question is whether Europe will call upon the Soviet Union to assist it in repelling the U.S. armed action. This is not out of the question. If the answer is positive, prospects for human survival are small. If negative, the enslavement of Europe, Africa, and Arabia to the political necessities dictated by U.S. bankruptcy and internal industrial decay are among the more favorable of the terrible possibilities.

The national mood is in favor of the coming war. Even the innocuous *Smithsonian* in January carried an article (by Robert Wallace) which opened by noting that "to many Americans, the exorbitant price of Arabian oil smacks of extortion. But it's trivial compared to what the Arabs demanded the *last* time they had us over a barrel. . . . We delivered gold and silver right to their docks because they sneered at our paper . . . . At last we ended the problem. We used a method unthinkable today: military force," and ends by reminding us that "Madison sent over a fleet commanded by Stephen Decatur, by then a commodore, who cowed the Arabs and ended the threat forever. Or so he thought."

To which one must comment that for something to be unthinkable it must first be in the forefront of someone's thinking. It certainly is not unthinkable to George Meany, who in January thundered (and the applause was thunderous) "not one cent for tribute," and reminded his audience that we used to handle these matters in an obvious way.

The prospect being what it is, *I* want to ask a question. Where is the peace movement today? Why are the voices which raised themselves so high against the Vietnam War not vociferating against the obviously planned war in the Mid-East?

Is it that America's protesting youth, now grown into adulthood, has developed laryngitis of the soul? Or do the peace advocates of yesterday view the prosperity for America, which the crushing of the Arabs will bring about, as a fair price for their consciences?

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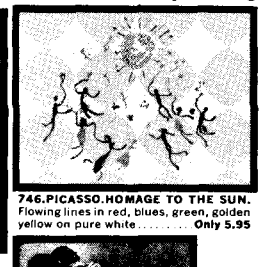

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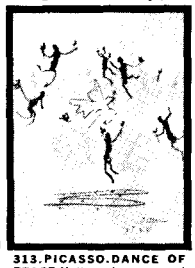

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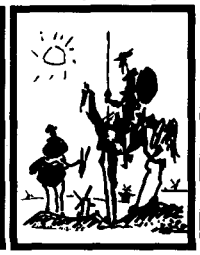

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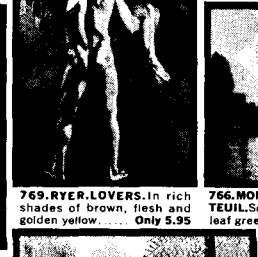

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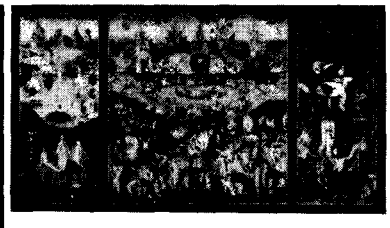

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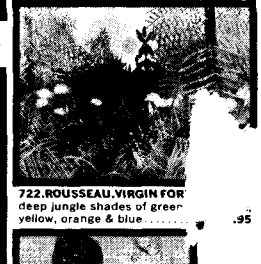

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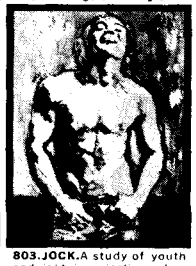

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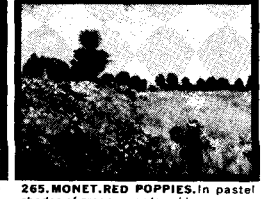

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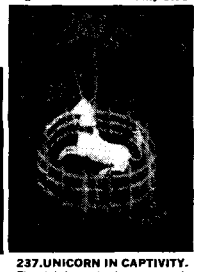

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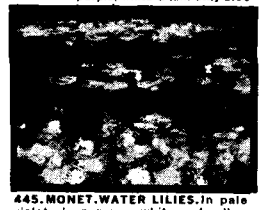

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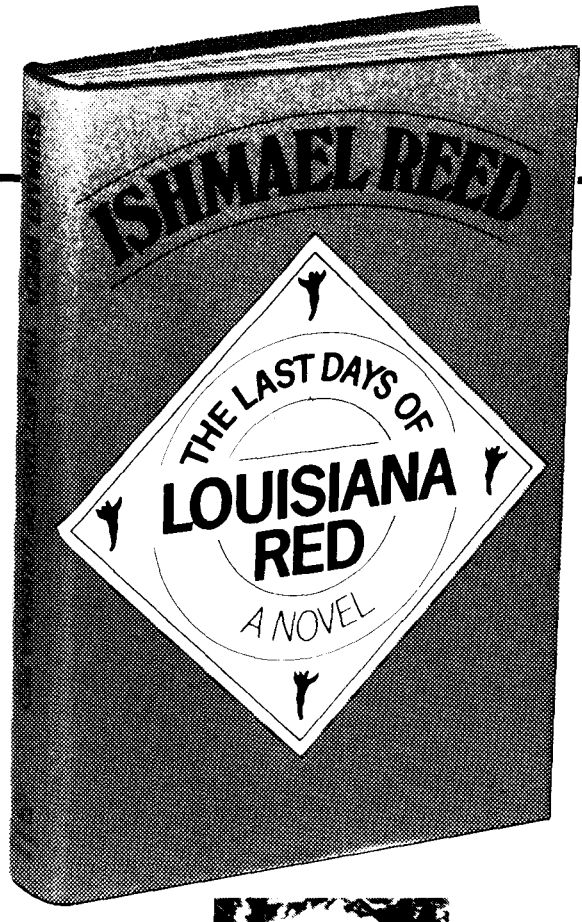

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